

CONTEMPORARY SOUTH AFRICAN PRINTMAKING:  
A STUDY OF THE ARTFORM IN RELATION TO  
SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITIONS,  
WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO  
THE CAVERSHAM PRESS



Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements  
for the degree of  
Master of Arts in Fine Arts  
at the  
University of Stellenbosch

Supervisor: Dr Marion Arnold  
Co-supervisor: Prof Keith Dietrich

December 2002

## DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this thesis is my own original work and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it at any university for a degree.

Signature..

Date



TITLE:

CONTEMPORARY SOUTH AFRICAN PRINTMAKING:

A STUDY OF THE ARTFORM IN RELATION TO SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITIONS,  
WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE CAVERSHAM PRESS

SUMMARY

The body of the thesis explores contemporary South African printmaking by focusing on The Caversham Press, established in 1985. Caversham's success encouraged the opening of four other studios, which formed the core of professional printmaking in South Africa up to 2000. Positioning Caversham in a broader arena, the politicised nature of printmaking in South Africa prior to 1985 is discussed and six projects produced at the Press between 1985 and 2000 are examined to situate the Press within the South African socio-economic and cultural context. Finally, the interaction between prints from Caversham Press projects and the art market in Johannesburg is described and analysed to ascertain the extent to which these six projects were products of their time and place in South African art history. In Appendices IV and V, the candidate's own printmaking work, which examines male midlife depression and its impact on the marital relationship, is discussed.

SAMEVATTING

Die hoofdeel van die tesis ondersoek die hedendaagse Suid-Afrikaanse drukkuns op die werk van The Caversham Press wat in 1985 gestig is, te fokus. Caversham se sukses het aanleiding gegee tot die ontstaan van vier ander drukkunsateljees wat die kern van professionele drukkuns gevorm het tot in die jaar 2000. Deur Caversham in 'n breër konteks te plaas, word die gepolitiseerde aard van drukkuns in Suid-Afrika voor 1985 bespreek. Verder word die ses ondernemings wat deur Caversham tussen 1985 en 2000 opgelewer is in die konteks van sosio-ekonomiese en kulturele omstandighede ondersoek. Ten slotte word die interaksie tussen Caversham Press projekte en die kunsmark van Johannesburg ontleed en bespreek met die doel om vas te stel tot hoe 'n mate hierdie ses projekte die tyd en plek van die Suid-Afrikaanse kunsgeskiedenis reflekteer. In Bylae IV en V, word die kandidaat se eie drukkunswerke, wat depressie in middeljarige mans ondersoek en die gevolg daarvan op die huweliksverhouding uitbeeld, bespreek.

## CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	i
PREFACE	ii
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS	iv
INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER 1: CONTEMPORARY SOUTH AFRICAN PRINTMAKING: A RECENT HISTORY	8
CHAPTER 2: THE ESTABLISHMENT AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE CAVERSHAM PRESS AS A CONTEMPORARY PRINTMAKING FACILITY	22
CHAPTER 3: SIX PRINTMAKING PROJECTS: SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHANGES IN THE ART MARKET FROM 1985-2000	39
CONCLUSION	73
APPENDIX I: SIX PROJECTS: A LIST OF ARTISTS AND ARTWORKS	78
APPENDIX II: MALCOLM CHRISTIAN: CURRICULUM VITAE AND BIOGRAPHY FROM 1970 TO 1985	86
APPENDIX III: LIST OF FACILITIES AND ACCOMMODATION AT THE CAVERSHAM PRESS	91
APPENDIX IV: THE CANDIDATE'S PRACTICAL WORK: <i>A STATE OF READINESS</i>	93
APPENDIX V: WRITINGS RELATING TO THE CANDIDATE'S PRACTICAL WORK	102
ILLUSTRATIONS	111
LIST OF SOURCES	132



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the following people for their assistance:

Malcolm Christian, for his role in fostering my passion for the printed image, for our many discussions on matters both related and unrelated to printmaking, and for his interest and insightful input into my own artwork;

Ros Christian, for her hospitality on my many visits to the Press;

Marion Arnold, my supervisor, for providing motivation and challenge at the start of my research period, and for her ongoing considered appraisal;

my co-supervisor, Keith Dietrich, for his critical yet humorous encouragement throughout the creation of my body of practical work; and for his assistance with practical and administrative matters pertaining to my registration as a distance student;

Kim Berman, for extending my understanding of printmaking and its possibilities; and her studio manager, Cara Walters, for including me in many of Artist Proof Studio's projects;

others in the South African printmaking arena, who have shown me generosity of spirit: Mark Attwood, Philippa Hobbs, David Krut, Andreas Schonfeldt, Dominic Thorburn and Helen Weldrick;

our clients, during my years as the representative for The Caversham Press, who often opened my eyes to new delights in an image;

those friends who bullied me onwards when my resolve wavered, in particular Johann Beuster (who, in addition, kindly translated the summary of this paper into Afrikaans), Sheila Flynn and Monique Rudman;

and finally, Costa, for his support and for providing me with so much source material for my practical work!

## PREFACE

During my time working with Malcolm Christian of The Caversham Press as his marketing representative in Gauteng from 1994-2000, I developed an appreciation for printmaking as an expressive art form, and the printed image as an aesthetic object.

At the risk of sounding romantic, visits to The Caversham Press intensified this passion. There one's senses are bombarded by the pleasurable stimuli of print creation: the fresh smell of newly-opened packs of Fabriano paper, the sight of rows of pots of mixed screenprint inks in a variety of hues, tapping one's fingers on the top of an antique oak plan chest to the sound of Malcolm's tape deck in the background, sitting in the sun on an old church pew while drinking tea and munching on home-baked cookies. And lively discussion, often centring around Malcolm's dreams for the Press's future. If ever a printmaker had kissed the Blarney Stone, it was Malcolm Christian! These are my memories of the magic of Caversham; and my enthusiasm for this special place was the impulse that prompted this research.

The research paper investigates the establishment of The Caversham Press and examines events leading to the development of its technical infrastructure. In addition, the recent history of South African printmaking is explored, to place The Caversham Press in an art historical context and to assess the influence that the Press has had on this history. Finally, six projects produced at the Press over a fifteen-year period are analysed from the perspective of their reception in the art market, to demonstrate that the kind of imagery collected can often reflect a particular socio-economic climate.

Information was gathered by researching literature; and from interviews, unrecorded conversations and my own perceptions while operating in the art market.

On the surface, there appears to be little connection between my practical work and the research undertaken for the thesis, but both areas of exploration represent different aspects of my life. For six years, The Caversham Press was an important part of my working life. But the practical component that I present for my degree relates to my domestic life, during and beyond that period. And although, formally, my practical work is presented as installation, much of it is screenprinted, some presented as hand-bound books, and text plays an integral



role. My interest in these elements of artmaking began while I was working at The Caversham Press, inspired in part by the similar enthusiasms of Malcolm Christian and Sheila Flynn.

The main body of this paper is the research thesis; and Appendices IV and V discuss my rationale for creating the specific body of practical work.

When I began this research, an ex-lecturer of mine from Technikon Witwatersrand, a painter, asked what I thought I could add to what has already been written about contemporary South African printmaking. This question prompted me to think critically about my research and to come to the realization that still, among non-printmakers, the importance of the printed image is often denied, prints being considered both technically mysterious and visually second rate to other media. Recent publications have dealt with aspects of local printmaking such as the different techniques and which studios offer them; artists working in print, both established and historically disadvantaged; and collections of contemporary South African art, chiefly corporate, which feature large numbers of prints. What more could anyone need to know about local printmaking?

A decision was made that the focus of this research paper should hinge on six projects that had a significant influence on the development of The Caversham Press. Despite using only three or four works from each project, all the participants are listed in total in an Appendix, highlighting the works named in this paper. Whilst documenting the artists and the titles of their works (137 works in all), I began to appreciate the commitment in terms of time, energy and money that Christian has invested in his Press, as the six projects reflect only a part of the print output of The Caversham Press.

If there is truth in the belief that the part represents the whole, then prints from The Caversham Press should reflect the state of contemporary South African printmaking, an exciting, dynamic medium which changes constantly in response to this country's socio-economic conditions.

## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Front illustration: Thami Jali, *View from The Caversham Press* (1994). Screenprint, 60 x 41,2 cm, edition of 30. Collection: A. Conidaris, Johannesburg.

(Source: original artwork).

Fig 1. Guiseppe Cattaneo, *The Gable* (The Johannesburg Centenary Portfolio) (1986). Screenprinted in 28 colours on 290 gms Fabriano Tiepolo, 42 x 64 cm, edition of 100. Collection: A. Conidaris, Johannesburg.

(Source: original artwork).

Fig 2. Robert Hodgins, *Encounter* (The Johannesburg Centenary Portfolio) (1986). Screenprinted in 10 colours on 290 gms Fabriano Tiepolo, 39 x 53,5 cm, edition of 100. Collection: A. Conidaris, Johannesburg.

(Source: original artwork).

Fig 3. Ezrom Legae, *Quarter to Twelve to Implosion* (The Johannesburg Centenary Portfolio) (1986). Screenprinted in 8 colours on 290 gms Fabriano Tiepolo, 55 x 38 cm, edition of 100. Collection: A. Conidaris, Johannesburg.

(Source: original artwork).

Fig 4. Marion Arnold (1985 Standard Bank Young Artist of the Year Award), *Incident* (Decade of Young Artists) (1991). Screenprinted in 10 colours on 300 gms BFK Rives, 59,8 x 85,2 cm, edition of 14. Collection: A. Conidaris, Johannesburg.

(Source: original artwork).

Fig 5. Gavin Younge (1986 Standard Bank Young Artist of the Year Award), *Flight* (Decade of Young Artists) (1991). Screenprinted in 16 colours on 300 gms BFK Rives, 83,2 x 56,5 cm, edition of 14. Collection: The Caversham Press, KwaZulu-Natal.

(Source: original artwork).



Fig 6. Feé Halstead Berning (Joint 1990 Standard Bank Young Artist of the Year Award), *The Arrival* (Decade of Young Artists) (1991). Screenprinted in 10 colours on 300 gms BFK Rives, 61,5 x 49,5 cm, edition of 14. Collection: The Caversham Press, KwaZulu-Natal. (Source: original artwork).

Fig 7. Bonnie Ntshalintshali (Joint 1990 Standard Bank Young Artist of the Year Award), *Jonah* (Decade of Young Artists) (1991). Screenprinted in 11 colours on 300 gms BFK Rives, 80 x 62,3 cm, edition of 14. Collection: The Caversham Press, KwaZulu-Natal. (Source: *Decade of Young Artists* catalogue 1991: 11).

Fig 8. John Manning, *Datura* (Art Meets Science: Flowers as Image) (1992). Handcoloured stone lithograph, 35,5 x 26 cm, edition of 50. Collection: A. Conidaris, Johannesburg. (Source: original artwork).

Fig 9. John Manning, *Gloriosa superba* (Art Meets Science: Flowers as Image) (1992). Screenprint, 28 x 20,5 cm, edition of 50. Collection: The Caversham Press, KwaZulu-Natal. (Source: original artwork).

Fig 10. Karel Nel, *Boat of the Oblivious Bloom* (Art Meets Science: Flowers as Image) (1992). Stone lithograph, 25 x 20 cm, edition of 50. Collection: The Caversham Press, KwaZulu-Natal. (Source: original artwork).

Fig 11. V. D. (Derek) Nxumalo, *Manor Garden* (Art Meets Science: Flowers as Image) (1992). Screenprint, 26,5 x 20,5 cm, edition of 50. Collection: The Caversham Press, KwaZulu-Natal. (Source: original artwork).

Fig 12. Edith Bukani, *Strict Parents* (The Spirit of our Stories: Images of African Narrative) (1995). Screenprint, 26 x 40 cm, edition of 45. Collection: A. Conidaris, Johannesburg. (Source: original artwork).

Fig 13. Wonderboy Nxumalo, *Making Fire Without Matches* (The Spirit of our Stories: Images of African Narrative) (1995). Screenprint, circular format diameter of 42,5 cm, edition of 45. Collection: A. Conidaris, Johannesburg.  
(Source: original artwork).

Fig 14. Sthembiso Sibisi, *Precious Gift* (The Spirit of our Stories: Images of African Narrative) (1994). Combination screenprint and lithograph, 29 x 42 cm, edition of 50. Collection: A. Conidaris, Johannesburg.  
(Source: original artwork).

Fig 15. Mmagabo Helen Sebidi, *Lebelo, Le a jelwa* (The Spirit of our Stories; Images of African Narrative) (1994). Screenprint, 43 x 70 cm, edition of 60. Collection: A. Conidaris, Johannesburg.  
(Source: original artwork).

Fig 16. Deborah Bell, *Salutations* (Ubu Centenaire: l'histoire d'un farceur criminel) (1997). Etching, drypoint and chin collé, 49,5 x 34 cm, edition of 50. Collection: A. Conidaris, Johannesburg.  
(Source: original artwork).

Fig 17. Robert Hodgins, *South Africa 197? – Interrogator* (Ubu Centenaire: l'histoire d'un farceur criminel) (1996). Screenprint, 26 x 30 cm, edition of 50. Collection: A. Conidaris, Johannesburg.  
(Source: original artwork).

Fig 18. William Kentridge, *Act II Scene I* (Ubu Centenaire: l'histoire d'un farceur criminel) (1996-97). Etching, drypoint and engraving (2 plates), 25 x 30 cm, edition of 50. Collection: The Caversham Press, KwaZulu-Natal.  
(Source: Cameron, D. et al 1999: 32).

Fig 19. Lynne Allen (New Jersey, U.S.A.), *My Winter Count* (The Hourglass Project) (1999). Combination screenprint stone lithograph linocut and chin collé, 67 x 97 cm, edition of 40. Collection: The Caversham Press, KwaZulu-Natal.  
(Source: original artwork).



Fig 20. Sheila Flynn (Durban, South Africa), *Bone-Doings and Memories* (The Hourglass Project) (1999). Screenprint, 84 x 54 cm, edition of 25. Collection: A. Conidaris, Johannesburg.

(Source: original artwork).

Fig 21. Patricia Hurl (Dublin, Ireland), *Tireanna* (The Hourglass Project) (1999). Screenprint, 82 x 61 cm, edition of 35. Collection: The Caversham Press, KwaZulu-Natal.

(Source: original artwork).

## INTRODUCTION

The Caversham Press, situated in the KwaZulu-Natal Midlands, was the first contemporary, private, professional, fine art printmaking studio in South Africa not directly allied to a formal institution or community art centre. It was self-funded, and provided the technical facilities and expertise necessary for South African artists to make limited edition original prints. Owned and run by master printer Malcolm Christian, The Caversham Press was established in 1985. Christian trained as a printer in KwaZulu-Natal and England in the 1970s, before lecturing in printmaking at tertiary institutions in Durban, Pietermaritzburg and Johannesburg.

From 1994 to 2000, I worked with Christian as The Caversham Press marketing representative in Johannesburg. During this time, I became fascinated by the ever-changing trends towards specific types of the printed image, and by the waxing and waning in popularity of individual artists. This research has been prompted by a desire to better understand the South African art market, and its relationship with fine art prints.

With the exception of a publication by Philippa Hobbs and Elizabeth Rankin in 1997, until 2000 there was a dearth of literature dedicated to South African printmaking, apart from essays and articles forming sections of other publications. This artform has played a significant role in contemporary artmaking, contributing to the cultural matrix of the country, and prints form a part of the aesthetic vocabulary of many top local artists. However, little is known about the printmakers themselves, often due to a professional reticence. An understanding of South African printmaking can be enhanced by more knowledge of these printmakers, their personalities, motives and manner of conducting their work. To this end, I have focussed the research on Malcolm Christian, the professional printmaker of longest standing in the local art world.

My first step was to document the establishment and development of The Caversham Press, in order to demonstrate the role it has played in the contemporary South African printmaking arena. This aim was achieved by holding interviews with Christian, and noting points made during conversations with artists and others associated with The Caversham Press.

As The Press had been established during the mid-1980s, during the apartheid era, and had successfully breached the transition into the new democratic South Africa, it became



necessary to place The Caversham Press into a broader context of a printmaking history. With this aim, I have considered two features of the recent history of South African printmaking: the politicised nature of printmaking as an artform; and the significance of other studios which have developed since the establishment of The Caversham Press, considering the different ethos of each. These two aspects have influenced the nature of printmaking in South Africa up to the present.

The political nature of the history of this artform in South Africa led me to speculate that the country's professional printmakers have an empathetic understanding of current concerns of the artists with whom they work. This awareness of topical issues in the art world usually suggested a particular focus for the themes of Christian's projects.

Deciding that the research should have a particular and concentrated focus, I have chosen works from six projects produced at The Caversham Press to explore my premises and illustrate my findings. The infrastructure and, sometimes, the operating practice at The Caversham Press were altered to accommodate each project and these factors were instrumental in the dynamic evolution of the nature of Christian's establishment. The projects, produced during the first fifteen years of the Press's existence, also demonstrate trends in general printmaking practice, reflecting changing social conditions and attitudes in South Africa, and how this impacts on the art market.

This research paper is structured into three chapters and three Appendices. The fourth and fifth appendices relate to the practical component of my studies.

Apart from describing two different aspects of my life, the personal and the professional, there is little concrete relationship between my practical work and the thesis. Formally, my own work has been influenced by my close contact with the prints from The Caversham Press. One of the pleasures of working with Malcolm Christian was his attention to minute detail and this influence has had a bearing on my own presentation.

However, due to the tenuous conceptual link between the two areas of study, I was encouraged to discuss my own work in a separate appendix, Appendix IV, rather than as a chapter attempting to merge with the research paper. Given the intensely personal nature of my practical area of study, I have chosen to write this appendix in the first person. In describing my response to my husband's years of depression, I have considered such aspects as the impact of depression on the family, coping strategies employed by the spouse and the connections between art making, healing and spirituality. My personal pathway of coping



with the situation, by means of writing, is discussed. My own writings, which form an integral part of the artworks, are transcribed in Appendix V.

My sources for this part of the thesis include three significant publications which provide insight into the state of depression: Judith Herman's *Trauma and Recovery* (1992), Demitri and Janice Peplos' *Overcoming Depression* (1987) and Michael Miller's *Intimate Terrorism* (1995).

Relating to the thesis, Chapter One, entitled 'Contemporary South African Printmaking: a Recent History', serves to introduce the art world context in which The Caversham Press was established. It records the inherently political nature of South African printmaking as an art medium, and documents the other four private printmaking studios that have developed since the founding of The Caversham Press. The contribution made to printmaking by these five studios is acknowledged. This part of the research owes much to the comprehensive resource provided by Hobbs and Rankin's book *Printmaking in a Transforming South Africa* (1997).

Chapter Two, 'The Establishment and Development of The Caversham Press as a Contemporary Printmaking Facility', describes the founding and development of the Press from 1985 to 2000. Information for this chapter was obtained by holding two formal recorded interviews with Christian in 1999. Using six projects as illustrations, the technical development of the Press is traced, as well as the gradual establishment of the network of artists who began to work with Christian at the Press. As a private enterprise, Christian is dependent on funds received from projects to improve and upgrade facilities at the Press.

Three Appendices relate to this chapter. Appendix One lists the participating artists and prints produced in each project. Appendix Two is a biography of Christian, from his student days to the opening of the Press: the nature of The Caversham Press is so inextricably bound to that of Christian, that it is necessary to have an understanding of his background and personality. Appendix Three lists the infrastructure and equipment at The Caversham Press, up to the year 2000.

Chapter Three, 'Six Printmaking Projects: Socio-Economic Changes in the Art Market from 1985-2000', relates to the interaction between prints from these projects and the Johannesburg art market. It explores the premise that these six projects were products of their time and place in South African art history, in keeping with the *zeitgeist* of the art world. The themes of the projects, some commissioned and some conceived by Christian, also reflect different



approaches to artmaking over this period. The participating artists are discussed, and reasons are explored for their inclusion in the projects.

Reference to prints from the projects, and their purchase by collectors and curators, indicates how parameters for selecting artworks shifted from 1985 to 2000, and especially since 1994, when South Africa made the transition to a fully democratic government. In addition, the manner of releasing the prints into the art market is described.

In discussing the production of the portfolios, the current issues of the art world are examined. Other events, such as the Standard Bank Young Artist Awards, the Vita Art Now Awards, the 1995 and 1997 Johannesburg Biennales and the establishment of collections of contemporary South African art are considered to assess whether they had any bearing on the imagery.

In part, this chapter relates my own conclusions, based on marketing experiences during the time I spent as Christian's marketing representative. By recording knowledge gained from personal perceptions, and, to quote Christian 'gained by osmosis', it is to be expected that my view could differ from that of another person working in the same art market at the same time. My observations have been derived to some extent from sales of and/or demands for specific prints or works by particular artists; and from the reaction of the client base of The Caversham Press to these images.

The general technical aspects of printmaking have not been described, as many publications are available to give full descriptions of printmaking processes. Methods of image production are discussed only to illustrate Christian's approach to the many different personalities and levels of skill of the artists that he works with; and to show his own development as a Master Printer.

In our postmodern era of interdisciplinary work and its multi-media approach to the production of artworks, it is unwise to adopt a prescriptive attitude as to what exactly constitutes the boundaries of printmaking. Both internationally and locally, contemporary artists may work with any traditional or commercial printing methods, printing onto paper and onto many other surfaces. Two-dimensional printed images may be created, or prints may exist as parts of three dimensional sculpture or installation. Traditional editioning standards may not be followed, if that suits the artist's concept and photography may be incorporated as printmaking.



So, as with other media, the definition of 'original print' will vary, depending on whom one asks. In South Africa, many artists and printmakers hold to traditional presentation and technical standards, while conceptually exploring current issues. However, there are other printmakers, for whom other ideals are of more importance, such as experimentation, collaboration, or the creation of accessible printmaking facilities to a broader range of artists, with less insistence on conventions such as editioning standards. In between lies a large range of artists and printmakers, with their own ideas and approach.

Having suggested that printmaking is a flexible activity, it is, nevertheless, useful to offer some clarification as to the meaning of 'printmaker'. A professional printmaker, often referred to as a Master Printer, operates as a technical facilitator and an advisor to artists wishing to make prints. The term 'professional' in this instance refers to a printmaker whose studio is income-bearing, and therefore needs business skills. An artist/printmaker is an artist, some of whose body of work consists of prints. He may have printed them himself or have worked under the auspices of a professional printmaker. A printmaking educator should teach students about the technical aspects of printmaking and relate these techniques to the students' work concepts. As in other areas of artmaking, frequently these roles are interrelated.

Contemporary artists may include prints as part of their visual vocabulary because it enhances the concept of their work. Thus a traditional printmaking method will become a primary form of expression, such as in the work of Dominic Thorburn, who uses aspects of the medium as a metaphor. In the work *Carbon Black and Old Brown*,<sup>1</sup> his use of heavy aquatint, with rosin dust, in itself a toxic substance, refers to the factory pollution of the Eastern Cape (Hobbs & Rankin 1997:77-78).<sup>2</sup>

Some artists may combine printmaking techniques to create mixed-media prints, for example, Philippa Hobbs' use of printed woodcut as elements of chin collé on her large collagraphs.<sup>3</sup> Others may combine print with another medium, as when Robert Hodgins, having made a screenprint of suited businessmen, reprinted the image onto canvas as a repeat motif, then over-painting the prints, creating a combination print/painting, almost as a monoprint in reverse.<sup>4</sup>

An artist may make prints to accompany work in other media, choosing print methods for the inherent formal visual properties offered by the technique, such as in the prints of William Kentridge, exhibited with his large scale drawings and hand-made videos.<sup>5</sup> One of Kentridge's conceptual concerns lies with recording of the history of a created work. This was



one of his original reasons for filming his drawings (Cameron *et al* 1999:114). Similarly, his prints, in which he normally makes use of many intaglio techniques, would have their own history in the making and proofing.

Other artists have created prints to exist as part of an overt political statement, often subverting traditional printmaking standards in the process, as did Sue Williamson from 1982-86 with her portrait series, *A Few South Africans*,<sup>6</sup> depicting women political activists. Some of these portraits were reproduced as postcards and distributed widely, becoming symbols of resistance in a highly charged political climate (Arnold 1996:134-36).

As the artworks referred to in the following chapters were produced at The Caversham Press, mention should be made of the printmaking approach of the director and Master Printer, Malcolm Christian. Christian works with artists in a one-on-one situation, offering technical advice and providing the facilities and skills necessary for printing. Formally, the prints from his Press, to date, are essentially traditional, in that they adhere to the requirements of a print discussed below.

The artist creates an image on a conventional printmaking matrix (plate, stone, block or screen), which is then transferred onto paper by the printer, under the supervision of the artist. The artist makes aesthetic choices of paper, ink and colour mixing. The printmaker may suggest appropriate methods or changes to achieve the desired printed image. After a B.A.T. proof<sup>7</sup> is accepted and signed by the artist, the edition is printed, sometimes without the artist's presence. One exception to this is screenprint, a technique that demands an image be built up by the overprinting of successive colours. Usually, an entire screenprint edition is printed in the artist's presence.

The prints produced at The Caversham Press are always a documented edition, and presented as two-dimensional artworks, usually framed for exhibiting purposes, although some prints have been produced with the intention of being bound in book form. This usually results in a small edition of hand-bound books. However, although the techniques and presentation conform to traditional standards, the Press's prints are varied in content and form.

After the establishment of The Caversham Press, prints began to form a significant part of many private, public and corporate collections. Christian's adherence to strict documentation of the editions protects the purchaser. In addition, his attention to market driven standards – consistent printing, use of professional quality materials, clean borders and careful storage of

prints to name a few – made prints acceptable to dealers and curators alike. Christian has helped set a reference standard for printmaking in South Africa.

The Caversham Press has been visited by numerous different artists living and working in South Africa, and many return time and again for the experience of making technically excellent prints in a creatively stimulating environment. As Hansen *et al* (1995:17) state:

...an important aspect of the relationship between the artist and printer is their personal chemistry. An artist usually chooses a printer not only on the basis of his or her technical expertise, but also for the ease with which the artist can work in that printer's shop. A printer sensitive to an artist's expression and manner of working can often anticipate his or her needs and respond to them without even a verbal exchange. A sympathetic ambience can stimulate an artist's creativity, just as a demanding but highly respected artist can inspire a printer's ingenuity.

---

#### ENDNOTES: INTRODUCTION

<sup>1</sup> Thorburn, Dominic, *Carbon Black and Old Brown* (1993). Photo-etching with aquatint mezzotint, drypoint and hand-colouring, 88 x 139,2 cm. Durban Art Gallery.

<sup>2</sup> The artworks I refer to in this Introduction are not central to the body of the thesis. Consequently, I have given their details in endnotes rather than under the List of Illustrations.

<sup>3</sup> For example, *Light Coming Up as a Hunchback* (1992). woodcut and collograph, 102 x 92 cm. (*Vita Art Now Catalogue*: 1992).

<sup>4</sup> Hodgins, Robert, *Boardroom Series* (1994). Series of five works, silkscreen and oil on canvas, each 75 x 75 cm. (Hodgins and Powell 1996:8).

<sup>5</sup> *Ubu Tells the Truth* print sequence exhibited with drawings and video of the same name at the Gertrude Posel Gallery, Johannesburg, 1997.

<sup>6</sup> Williamson produced sixteen portrait prints between 1982 and 1987 (Arnold 1996:175).

<sup>7</sup> B.A.T. proof is an abbreviation for the French term *bon à tirer* meaning 'okay to print'. It is the final proof for the printer, on which the edition is based.



## CHAPTER ONE

### CONTEMPORARY SOUTH AFRICAN PRINTMAKING: A RECENT HISTORY

The 1960s are considered to be the decade in which printmaking in Europe and the USA became a significant artform in terms of participation in the contemporary art arena. Most frequently, the Pop artists are named as the earliest artists to fully exploit the medium as a comment on society, as their images, related to the subject of consumerism, were linked conceptually to the medium in which they worked. The importance of the contribution printmaking has made to subsequent art movements, from conceptual through to postmodern, is evident in the works of many artists from the 1970s until the present. Concerns of artists/printmakers are as varied as their personalities and experiences.

However, Okwui Enwezor, in a discussion of the prints in the Gencor Collection, considers Goya's use of the print as a form of social critique to be a precursor of the manner in which black African artists from the 1960s onwards employed print to comment on society (1997:71). The nature of printmaking allows for repeated replication of an image, for the use of multiples of an image in a single work and is linked to photographic processes, making the medium an ideal tool for social observation.

Because of the specific social context in which the artform has developed in this country, contemporary South African printmaking has its own particular history. From the 1960s, much of South African artmaking was polarized along racial grounds. Owing to the National Party policy of separate development, excellent facilities were available to the ruling white minority, yet few available to other social groups. In 1979, a conference entitled *The State of Art in South Africa* was held at the University of Cape Town. At this venue, the extent of the isolation between the two groups of artists was acknowledged<sup>1</sup> and two important resolutions were passed. One was the demand that educational facilities be opened up to artists of all races; and the other, that artists boycott all state-sponsored exhibitions until such time as this happened.

These resolutions were widely supported by artists, leading to the cancellation in 1980 of the government-sponsored Republic Festival (Sack 1988:24). This led to the phenomenon in the 1980s of corporate sponsorship of art competitions, including the still-running Standard Bank Young Artist of the Year Award.<sup>2</sup> Other competitions that developed included the Vita Awards,<sup>3</sup> the Standard Bank Drawing Competition<sup>4</sup> and the Cape Town Triennial.

In 1982, a conference called *Art Towards Social Development and Change in South Africa* was held in Botswana,<sup>5</sup> the aim of which was to encourage artists to see themselves as “cultural workers”, who should actively resist the apartheid regime with their art (Kasfir 1999:155). It was felt that “cultural resistance was a tool of immense power” (Williamson 1989:9). In addition, in traditional African culture, art had a community function, and at this period, it was considered that the function of art should be to provoke social awareness and thus political change (Williamson 1989:9).

This caused socio-political issues to become a recurring theme in the work of both black and white artists. Emile Maurice complained that although Western artists were free to choose what art to make and how to make it, the community artist often felt obligated to use his creativity in service of his community and was under pressure to produce work reflecting the concerns of the community (Sack 1988:26). However, Kasfir maintains that many white artists struggled with the conflict between their political ideals and their socio-economic status of privilege (1999:155).

Many white artists made artworks that examined the social discrepancies forced on South African society by the apartheid regime. Some were active in setting up community art projects for disenfranchised artists, sharing the skills that they were learning from the advantage of their more privileged position and encouraging black artists and educators to take control of these projects (D’Amato 1999:44). In his discussion regarding the concept of community based art centres, the Johannesburg artist David Koloane acknowledges that the driving force behind some centres<sup>6</sup> became “political resistance rather than formal education” (1999:23).

As a result, the content of much art of this period was politically charged. Printmaking came to be regarded as a democratic medium. It was perceived as a medium with the ability to disseminate information of a political nature, whether as fine art with subtle political content or as a means to provide overt political messages in the form of posters, banners or, more usually, T-shirts



(Thorburn 1999:9). The cost of producing prints, as opposed to works in other media, was thus low; and works on paper were portable, unlike canvases or sculptures (Enwezor 1997:72).

White printmakers with access to sophisticated equipment made prints in all printmaking techniques. Community workshops usually only had access to linocut or woodcut facilities, which could be handprinted without a press. As a result, particular printmaking techniques in themselves often had social or political significance.

The labels 'Resistance Art' and 'Township Art' came into existence to qualify a particular form of art made either with political content or in community workshops, primarily for the benefit of the art market. In the art market there also existed a belief that work by black artists should be unaffected by contemporary fine art issues. Steven Sack maintains that there developed a period of debate around such issues as the crossover between "high" art and "low" art and the merits of images of township life compared to images of traditional life (1988:24). Philippa Hobbs states that an image showing African traditional life is read from different perspectives in different decades. In the 1980s, the image would have been perceived as pandering to the tourist market, yet in the 1990s, the same image could be perceived as an expression of pride in a newly enfranchised cultural identity (Hobbs & Rankin 1997:4).

An international cultural boycott was imposed on South Africa, increasing artists' preoccupations with the state of the country. The 1980s saw an intensification of political message in artworks, and this legacy remained after the country's first democratic elections in 1994 (Hobbs & Rankin 1997:4). The televised Truth and Reconciliation Commission hearings (1996-1999), where many ordinary South Africans, for the first time, came to realize the full extent of the outrages committed in the name of apartheid, resulted in a period of retrospection and then introspection. This introspection has finally led to an acceptance of humanist and personal issues as equally legitimate content for artwork.

The works of William Kentridge, probably at present South Africa's best-known artist/printmaker,<sup>7</sup> parallel thematic issues that artists in this country have been grappling with. His work in the 1980s, for example the screenprint triptych *Art in a State Of Grace; Art in a State of Hope; Art in a State of Siege*,<sup>8</sup> dealt with exploitation by business and the comfort zone of the white population (Williamson 1989: 33). The early 1990s extended this theme into the downfall of the ruling class, using the narrative of Soho Eckstein, a corrupt businessman, as a parable in



the video and print *Felix in Exile*.<sup>9</sup> The mid-1990s saw him preoccupied with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission with the video and print sequence *Ubu tells the Truth*. His most recent print works, for example *Man with Megaphone* and *Man with Megaphone Cluster*,<sup>10</sup> have been frankly autobiographical.

Dominic Thorburn (1999:8) maintains that the cultural boycott during the apartheid era and South Africa's remote geographical location are factors which have driven contemporary South African artist/printmakers to produce exciting work that is conceptually relevant and topical by international standards. Technically, and in variety of styles, South African printmaking is on a par with prints made in Europe and the USA, as can be seen in the works of the most recent suite of prints from The Caversham Press, *The Hourglass Project*.

South African printmaking is a complex specialty, sometimes displaying divided opinion between different printmakers. For example, Christian insists on adhering to traditional techniques and strict principles of editioning whereas Kim Berman is more interested in pushing the expressive boundaries of printmaking techniques, which often results in the production of a series of monoprints or a small *edition variable*.<sup>11</sup> However, there exists respect and collaboration, especially with joint projects. Hobbs acknowledges a tight-knit network in the movement of printmakers from department to department of tertiary institutions, as students, teachers, artists, curators and professional printmakers (Hobbs & Rankin 1997:11). Often one person functions in more than one of these areas. The essential nature of printmaking is a collaborative one, and although the theory of approach to printmaking differs between the academic world and the private press, there is often crossover in the sharing of skills and information.

South Africa's professional presses have been established by printmakers, many of whom have been formally trained in Europe and the USA, after initial study in South Africa. Most professional printmaking training brings the apprentice into contact with the realities of the art market.

By comparison, in recent years, many of the staff in printmaking departments in the tertiary institutions, with a few exceptions, have trained locally, moving from student to lecturer status. To date, and in general, the nature of the printmaking major on offer at South African institutions takes the form of an autonomous body of work by the student in any printmaking technique, alongside an academic research paper. The student is encouraged to work purely as a fine artist,



with little emphasis on the commercial aspect of career development, as opposed to the current approach of institutions in Europe or the USA

Berman, who obtained a Master's Degree in Printmaking at Boston University, maintains that Masters students ran the associated Boston Art Gallery Summer School classes, and in addition, undertook private contract work. Another example is the printmaking department of the University of Western England, run by Richard Anderton. To boost funds, enabling the constant upgrading of printmaking facilities, the department is opened for contract printing work in the university vacations. Private artists visit the department and make editions of prints, using the services of Masters students, under the supervision of the chief printmaking technician.<sup>12</sup> Compare this to the majority of South African institutions, where the printmaking facilities stand unused for a third of the year, except by the staff for the printing of their own work.

There were two exceptions. Jan Jordaan of Natal Technikon undertakes private contract printing. Pippa Skotnes, with Malcolm Payne of the University of Cape Town, arranged funding from the University to produce portfolios and fine art books at Skotnes's studio, the Axeage Press (Hobbs & Rankin 1997: 27). However, the Axeage Press is no longer in existence and neither of these projects directly provided extra funds for their institutions' printmaking departments.

Associate Professor at Rhodes University, Dominic Thorburn, who was the Graphic Art Section, is an academic and a Tamarind-trained printer. Until 2000, he was addressing these commercial and employment issues by establishing a small private press, the Fine Line Press, to run alongside the Rhodes University Print Research Unit. In addition, he was negotiating for the establishment of a professionally recognized Print Technician's Certificate course at the University.<sup>13</sup>

At The Caversham Press, Christian has developed a Graduate Assistant's Programme with Rutgers University, which affords one of their senior students the opportunity of being actively involved with specific projects at the Press for four to twelve weeks. At present, owing to links formed with Rutgers University,<sup>14</sup> this opportunity is available only to international students.

By nature of the specific technical training necessary to become a competent professional printmaker, until recently many skills have had to be learnt beyond South Africa's borders, often at the printmaker's own expense. In addition, printmaking is a capital-intensive business, as the infrastructure required in order to equip a professional studio, and the running costs in terms of



materials, are considerable. This must be borne in mind when one compares the price of a print on exhibition with the price of, for example, a painting by the same artist.

These factors can lead to the deduction that local printmakers, as a group, are committed to their specialty, and often ingenious in their attempts to survive financially. These years of determination were made concrete when 1998 saw the first South African Printmaking Congress. Entitled *New Ground Common Ground*, this congress took place in Grahamstown, and was organised by Thorburn of Rhodes University.

There were 125 delegates present – Thorburn had been hoping for only half that number. The delegates, who had travelled from all over the country, and included a few international guest speakers, were printmakers, artists, curators, dealers, educators and students. Running alongside papers, discussion panels and workshops were print exhibitions.

If one considers the congress delegates to be representative of the people working within the South African printmaking arena today, a few key figures should be mentioned here. At present, there are five collaborative, co-operative, professional, printmaking studios functioning in South Africa. These studios offer specific printmaking techniques, and have a particular focus in terms of the artists they work with. They have professionally trained printmakers as their founding directors. They are: in KwaZulu-Natal, The Caversham Press and Stepping Stone Press; in the Cape, Hard Ground Printmakers; and in Gauteng, Artist Proof Studio and The Artists' Press.

Hobbs identified the establishment of The Caversham Press by Christian, in 1985, as the point at which South African printmaking could be considered to have joined the arena of contemporary, international printmaking standards. She maintains that this was the start of a new era during which private printmaking studios have opened up countrywide, providing facilities and technical expertise for local artists (Hobbs & Rankin 1997:23-24). It took Christian a few years to establish his press professionally. His first significant exhibition, a retrospective featuring five years of work from the Press, was held at the 1989 Standard Bank National Arts Festival. The other studios began to open from 1990.

In KwaZulu-Natal, The Caversham Press was opened after Christian, who had trained in Natal and at Croydon College, England, in the 1970s, had spent eight years working at tertiary institutions, including Durban Technikon, the University of Natal (Pietermaritzburg) and the



University of the Witwatersrand. In 1992, Stepping Stone Press was established by Greg Hayes, who had trained at the Tamarind Institute in New Mexico (Hobbs & Rankin 1997:24). In Cape Town, Jonathan Comerford, after studying printmaking at the Ruth Prowse Art Centre in Cape Town (Hobbs & Rankin 1997:45) and completing apprenticeships at Cyrenian's and Peacock Printmakers in Aberdeen, Scotland, set up Hard Ground Printmakers in 1990 (Comerford 1999:5). In Johannesburg, Artist Proof Studio was established in 1991 by Kim Berman, a graduate of the University of the Witwatersrand, on her return to South Africa after completing her higher studies in the USA (Hobbs & Rankin 1997:26). Berman named her studio after the Boston-based Artist Proof Studio, where she worked as a contract printer. The Artists' Press was established in 1990 by Mark Attwood, trained as a Tamarind 'master printer' (Hobbs & Rankin 1997:24).

The Caversham Press has facilities for the traditional printmaking techniques of intaglio, relief, lithography and screenprint, as well as for the binding of fine art books. Stepping Stone Press offers only lithography, as does The Artists' Press. Artist Proof Studio is equipped for relief and intaglio processes, collagraphs and monotypes, often using contemporary, experimental surfaces such as x-ray film while Hard Ground Printmakers have facilities for relief and intaglio processes and screenprint.

The establishment of another four facilities in South Africa in just eighteen months, in the three major centres of Johannesburg, Cape Town and Durban, led to a surge of interest in printmaking among artists. This printmaking renaissance was in part a response to the new facilities and social conditions.

Each studio tends to have its own network of artists, and invests time and energy in cultivating these professional relationships. Until recently, artists generally did not move from one studio to another, again testifying to the importance of the creative connection between artist and printmaker. However, with the international opening up of the South African art world, there has been greater movement of artists between the different printmaking studios at a national level. The artists are often invited to participate in specific ventures, such as *The Hourglass Project*, in which Sophie Peters, who normally uses the facilities at Hard Ground Studio, and Grace Tshuvukhe, a former student from Artist Proof Studio, took the opportunity of working together with international artists at The Caversham Press. In addition, there is often an alliance between the presses for particular projects, for example, Artist Proof Studio and Hard Ground Printmakers



have collaborated with each other and international studios in print exchanges.<sup>15</sup> Also, artists may be commissioned by an art publisher to produce prints, and then the publisher will decide on which studio is to be used.<sup>16</sup>

Many South African artists have worked at The Caversham Press, and Christian has had a long association with the likes of Marion Arnold, Deborah Bell, Robert Hodgins, William Kentridge and Andrew Verster. Although Christian offers printmaking in all the traditional techniques, his particular area of specialization is screenprint. Artists who work elsewhere in other printmaking media will travel to Caversham to make screenprints. Pretoria-based artist Andre Naude will screenprint at Caversham but make lithographs at Attwood's more conveniently situated press. Stellenbosch-based Lyn Smuts, who has her own etching studio, will travel to Caversham for screenprinting.

Attwood has trained Paul Emmanuel, an artist and printmaker, as a technical lithographer, and until 2001, he worked with most of the fine artists at The Artists' Press. Emmanuel has become a highly skilled lithographer. Kentridge, who used to print only at Caversham when working in South Africa, now travels to Caversham for etching, but makes some of his lithographs at Attwood's studio.

The Artists' Press and Artist Proof Studio source artists from The Bag Factory in Newtown, a funded space consisting of a warehouse of small work studios for professional community artists. These two studios work routinely with David Koloane, Sam Nhlengethwa and co-director of Artist Proof Studio, Nhlanhla Xaba. Berman and Emmanuel, both graduates of the University of the Witwatersrand, are supported both by the University's network, and by ex-students of Berman from Technikon Witwatersrand.

Stepping Stone Press is supported by Andries Botha, who also recruits artists such as José Ferreira and Tito Zungi, to work there.<sup>17</sup> Comerford and his partner Judy Woodbourne are both printmakers/artists. Other artists such as Sue Williamson, Sophie Peters, Willie Bester and Lien Botha use Hard Ground Printmakers' facilities (Comerford 1999:5).

Although the art market was brisk in the late 1980s and early 1990s, it has been curtailed by a number of factors that will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Three. As a result, in order to



remain in operation, the professional studios constantly have to reassess their approach, which has in part led to the development of each having its own character.

Each studio is active in promoting the prints it produces. The Caversham Press, which does not sell work directly to the public, markets prints through a small nationwide network of dealers, curators and collection consultants, and has its own representative in Gauteng who deals in Caversham prints exclusively. In addition, The Caversham Press exhibits regularly at the annual Standard Bank National Arts Festivals in Grahamstown. The other presses welcome potential clients to their premises to view the prints, be they dealers, curators or the general public. Hard Ground Printmakers and Artist Proof Studio both hold regular exhibitions of produced work. The artists who use The Artists' Press also market their own prints themselves.

In addition, the private presses have set other structures in place to aid themselves financially. The Artists' Press runs a busy and successful commercial lithography outfit, supplying exhibition invitation cards and catalogues for artists countrywide. Hard Ground Printmakers publish limited edition calendars of original prints for the corporate world. Comerford has also set up a service company, which imports printmaking materials from Europe and the USA and distributes these to schools, private studios and other workshops (Comerford 1999:5).

The studios fundraise constantly in a climate of diminishing available funds, in an attempt to allow artists whose work may not be marketable to work in their studios. Throughout the years, The Caversham Press has received funding for specific proposed projects. In addition, Christian receives corporate sponsorship for a non-profit Educational Trust, established in 1993, which permits historically disadvantaged young artists the chance to explore printmaking as an expressive medium in a workshop situation. By contrast, Berman applies annually for funding for studio bursaries, allowing a number of young black artists the opportunity of working full-time or part-time in her studio for a year, where they receive ongoing tuition in printmaking and associated skills. At the end of their bursary period, the young artist will have both technical knowledge and a body of work in print.

Although no bursaries are available at Hard Ground Printmakers, Comerford provides some funded printing to aid disadvantaged artists in building up a body of work. Some of these artists sell their work at local flea markets. Comerford plans to institute a program of apprenticeship, with these trainees setting up satellite community printmaking studios.



This past decade has shown up the difficulties in establishing and maintaining community art centers. Hobbs cites reasons such as a high turn-over in staff and lack of permanent premises (Hobbs & Rankin 1997:20). Three of the most long-standing and successful centers are CAP<sup>18</sup> in Cape Town, the African Arts Centre in Durban and FUBA<sup>19</sup> in Johannesburg. These facilities were started during the apartheid years with international funding, as a means of empowering the disadvantaged artistic community. Since the 1994 democratic elections, however, much of this financial support has been stopped. Although some projects have ceased to exist, funding difficulties have forced others to become self-sustaining.

Thorburn (1999:8-9) maintains that the professional presses are playing a necessary role in education, outreach and partnership programs. Certainly, the professional studios have taken over the role of providing dedicated printmaking facilities for these artists. Artists Proof Studio and The Artists' Press, and more recently The Caversham Press, regularly host visiting printmakers who act as artists-in-residence and offer skills-sharing workshops.<sup>20</sup>

In addition to providing printmaking facilities for the disadvantaged, the private studios have been active in various outreach programmes, benefiting society at large. Artists Proof Studio and Hard Ground Printmakers have been instrumental in establishing the National Paper Prayers Campaign to promote AIDS awareness through the art of printmaking. This multi-pronged approach includes community artists and children making prints while learning about AIDS, as well as the sale of donated prints by established artists to raise funds for the AIDS Awareness Campaign.<sup>21</sup>

One creative development regarding the interaction between printmaking studios and communities is the growth in popularity of the exchange portfolio. This takes the form of invited artists producing an edition of a printed image using funded materials, and donating the entire edition to the organisers. In return, the artist receives a portfolio containing one print by each participant. The edition is greater than the number of participants, and the balance of the portfolios will travel and often enter significant collections.

The best-organised exchange portfolios encourage interaction between participants, leading to exchange of ideas and skills. The artist is often given a theme within which to work. Artists are happy to donate their time and creativity, as a sense of solidarity builds among the participants. On a practical level, although no income is derived from the project, the artist will add to his



personal collection a number of prints by a selection of artists. In addition, it becomes a way for the lesser-known participating artists to be represented in important collections.

Thorburn organised a print exchange between thirteen tertiary institutions for the *New Ground Common Ground* Conference in 1998.<sup>22</sup> This was the first exchange between institutions exclusively. The participants were one staff member and three students from each department. Hobbs claims that until the 1970s printmaking was taught in South African art schools “in a desultory manner” (Hobbs & Rankin 1997:11). Although printmaking is now taught systematically in some tertiary institutions, the tuition received can be erratic, varying from year to year, dependant on the interests and experience of the staff at the time.<sup>23</sup>

Again, the directors of the private presses have committed themselves to promoting technical excellence by making themselves available as outsourced part-time lectures in the tertiary institutions. Christian taught at the University of Natal (Pietermaritzburg) three days a week in the late 1980s. Berman is Head of Printmaking at Technikon Witwatersrand and has employed part-time staff from Artist Proof Studio and The Artists’ Press. Comerford provided printmaking expertise at Peninsula Technikon until its art section was disbanded.

Mention should be made here of the several private studios set up countrywide by artists/printmakers for producing their own work and to earn income with private teaching. Some had previously lectured, full time or part time, at tertiary institutions; or were graduates in printmaking.<sup>24</sup> These small studios offer classes and short courses in printmaking. They often act as an informal variant of the Open Access studio concept, whereby members pay a monthly fee to use the facilities.

These studios provide an important service to artists who do not fall into the categories provided for by the professional studios. Many are white women artists, who have not yet held solo exhibitions, but are committed to print as an expressive medium. The co-operative marketing arms of the professional studios do not consider them to be sufficiently established to merit an invitation to print, and the professional studio’s costs for lesser-known artists are prohibitive. Yet as these artists are considered privileged rather than disadvantaged, they cannot fall under the community-funding umbrella.

Local political history has impacted on the arts produced in South Africa over the last few decades. This has been mirrored by the facilities that have arisen for printmakers/artists, and the evolution of these studios. Artists working in print have explored issues ranging from the overtly political to the personal, making work that is both relevant to their society and in line with international contemporary thinking in the arts. In turn, this has influenced the development of the South African art market for prints. With the interaction that occurs between the roles of student, educator, professional printmaker, curator and dealer, the South African printmaking community has become close-knit, active and committed to its medium.

---

#### ENDNOTES: CHAPTER ONE

<sup>1</sup> No black visual artists presented papers at the Congress, and it became apparent that invitations to present had not been accepted due to the perception that nothing would change as a result of the conference (Younge, cited in Williamson 1989:9).

<sup>2</sup> Established in 1980.

<sup>3</sup> Established in 1985.

<sup>4</sup> Established in 1987, although only the inaugural exhibition was held.

<sup>5</sup> This conference was held in Gaborone, Botswana, to allow artists living in exile to attend (Williamson 1989:9).

<sup>6</sup> Koloane names centres such as the Community Arts Project (CAP), Cape Town; the Funda and Molofo centres, Soweto; the Federated Union of Black Arts (FUBA), Johannesburg; the Alexandra Art Centre (no longer in existence); and the Johannesburg Art Foundation (no longer in existence), Johannesburg (1999:23).

<sup>7</sup> Although there are many artists/printmakers making significant work in the South African art world, I have named William Kentridge as the best known. From the perspective of this research, his international success, culminating in his receiving the prestigious Carnegie Prize in 2000, has led to recognition of his worth as an artist, and a desire to purchase his work by his peers and by people outside the fine art arena.

<sup>8</sup> Kentridge, William, *Art in a State of Grace; Art in a State of Hope; Art in a State of Siege* 1988. Triptych, Silkscreen on Paper, 160 x 100 cm each. (Cameron 1999:103).

<sup>9</sup> Kentridge, William, *Felix in Exile* 1999. Etching on paper, edition of 35, 78 x 54 cm



---

(Collection: A. Conidaris).

<sup>10</sup> Kentridge, William, *Man With Megaphone* and *Man With Megaphone Cluster* 1999. Etching, crayon on paper, 25 x 38 cm. (Cameron 1999:97).

<sup>11</sup> An *edition variable* is an extension of monoprinting, resulting in a small edition of similar rather than identical prints. There may be subtle or obvious changes in ink colour, the addition of collé elements or surface rolls.

<sup>12</sup> Conversation with UWE print technician, Dave Fortune, at Impact Congress, Bristol, September 1999.

<sup>13</sup> In conversations with Dominic Thorburn, Impact Congress, Bristol, 1999. From this year (2002), Brenda Schmahmann has become Head of Department at Rhodes University, and it seems unlikely that the certificate course will be developed.

<sup>14</sup> One of the participants of *The Hourglass Project*, Lynne Allen, has become a member of the Board of Trustees of The Caversham Press, and has facilitated this programme.

<sup>15</sup> For example, the portfolio *Print-Exchange* organized by the Flemish Frans Masereel Printmaking Centre; participants being artists from this centre, and artists from both Artist Proof Studio, Johannesburg and Hard Ground Studio, Cape Town.

<sup>16</sup> For example, the Johannesburg-based publisher, David Krut, has commissioned the facilities at The Caversham Press, The Artist's Press and Artist Proof Studio.

<sup>17</sup> Newspaper article by Kay Smart.

<sup>18</sup> Community Arts Project, Cape Town, established 1977 (Sack 1988:98).

<sup>19</sup> FUBA Academy, previously known as the Federated Union of Black Artists, Newtown Johannesburg, established 1978 (Sack 1988:98).

<sup>20</sup> Artists Proof Studio and The Artists' Press are in Newtown, Johannesburg, and collaborate frequently. As Attwood's studio offers only lithographic techniques and Berman's offers every technique apart from lithography, these two printmakers have built up a good working relationship. The Artists' Press is situated in The Bag Factory, sponsored premises for artists.

<sup>21</sup> Under the joint auspices of Artist Proof studio and Technikon Witwatersrand where she lectures, Berman has been instrumental in setting up income-generating projects for rural women. Students from the Technikon have trained a community of women in the skills of paper-making, providing them with knowledge of access to the craft market. Subsequently, a TWR graduate Sheila Flynn has moved to Natal and is initiating the development of a similar structure under the umbrella of The Caversham Press.

<sup>22</sup> The institutions were: in the Cape, Rhodes University, the University of Cape Town, and Port Elizabeth Technikon; in KwaZulu-Natal, the University of Durban-Westville and Technikon Natal; in the Free State, the University of the Orange Free State and Technikon Free State; and in Gauteng, the University of Pretoria, Pretoria Technikon, the University of South Africa, the University of the Witwatersrand, Technikon Witwatersrand and Vaal Triangle Technikon.

---

<sup>23</sup> (2000): Although the Cape has centres of excellence in printmaking, the specialty is not offered at Peninsula Technikon though is available to design students at Cape Technikon. The University of Stellenbosch does offer printmaking but not as an independent subject and it is taught by part-time staff, and may be taken by both Fine Art and Graphic Design students. Thorburn's commitment to printmaking, as an educator and artist, has led to Rhodes University becoming an important department for this medium. The University of Cape Town also has significant printmakers on their staff, namely Stephen Inggs, a lithographer trained at Brighton Polytechnic, and Pippa Skotnes, an artist and experienced intaglio printer. Jeff Rankin, a printmaker who trained at Croydon College with Christian, is at Border Technikon, although his field of interest is illustration (Hobbs & Rankin 1997).

<sup>24</sup> Examples in Johannesburg are Hobbs, who was Head of Printmaking at Technikon Witwatersrand before Berman, and has established the Footprint Studio. One of her Master's students, John Moore, has set up Fingerprint Studio. A graduate from the University of the Witwatersrand, Beverley Marks-Paton, has established the Sloth Press. John Clarke, Head of Printmaking at UNISA from the mid-1980s to 1995, has established the Leopardstone Press in Pretoria (Hobbs & Rankin 1997).



## CHAPTER TWO

### THE ESTABLISHMENT AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE CAVERSHAM PRESS AS A CONTEMPORARY PRINTMAKING FACILITY

In 1985, Malcolm Christian opened the doors of his studio, The Caversham Press, thereby changing the face of printmaking in South Africa. His Press was the first contemporary, privately run, professional printmaking studio in South Africa. The Caversham Press was not directly allied to a formal institution or community art centre and was self-funded. It provided the technical facilities and expertise necessary for South African artists to make limited edition original prints.

The nature of The Caversham Press is so inextricably bound to that of Christian, that it is useful to have an understanding of his background and personality. Thus, a biography of Christian, from his student days to the opening of his establishment, has been included in Appendix II.

In brief, after graduation, Christian spent ten years teaching printmaking at several tertiary institutions.<sup>1</sup> Inspired by the number of small, co-operative studios he had seen in England, he wished to develop a peaceful print studio in the country, where he could work with artists on an individual basis. Since his student days, he had assisted practising artists with printing and felt satisfaction in helping others to achieve their creative aims.

At the end of 1984, Christian discovered a derelict Wesleyan church in the Caversham area of the Kwazulu-Natal Midlands. He wished to acquire the building from the Methodist Church, feeling that the seclusion and the quality of the space would make a good printmaking studio. The building stood on an acre of land, with 60 gravestones. As chance would have it, the Church was having difficulty in maintaining the property, and was prepared to sell it to Christian for the value of the land alone.

In 1985, Christian and his family moved down to Natal at Easter time. He drilled for water, and then built the family home<sup>2</sup> adjoining the church by July. The basic studio space was prepared and fitted out in the church by September.

During the first six years of The Caversham Press's existence, Christian ran the printmaking department at The University of Natal (Pietermaritzburg), working part-time three days a week, on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. Then artists would arrive at The Caversham Press on Thursday evenings and studio work would take place from Fridays through to Mondays. This punishing schedule was a financial necessity and Christian maintains that it was only an inner conviction that a place such as The Caversham Press needed to be established that carried him through.

During Christian's last term at the University of the Witwatersrand in 1985, prior to founding Caversham, Alan Crump approached him with a proposal for The Caversham Press's first print commission. 1986 was the year of the Johannesburg City Centenary, and Christopher Till, in conjunction with The Brenthurst Press,<sup>3</sup> wished to publish a portfolio of prints by five Johannesburg artists in an edition of one hundred.<sup>4</sup> This offer provided the impetus necessary to establish the facilities as quickly as possible, as the portfolio had to be completed by January of 1986.<sup>5</sup>

*The Johannesburg Centenary Portfolio* was the first major project undertaken at The Caversham Press. To date, six projects in particular, resulting in suites of prints, are considered to have helped the evolution of the Press, technically, conceptually and financially. For this reason, selected works from these projects have been used in this research to illustrate the development of The Caversham Press. The dates and titles of these projects are:

1986: *The Johannesburg Centenary Portfolio*

1991: *Decade of Young Artists*

1992: *Art Meets Science: Flowers as Image*<sup>6</sup>

1995: *The Spirit of our Stories: Images of African Narrative*<sup>7</sup>

1997: *Ubu Centenaire: l'histoire d'un farceur criminel*<sup>8</sup>

1999: *The Hourglass Project*



The Caversham Press welcomed its first artist, Robert Hodgins, in September 1985. Compared to the facilities offered by Christian today, the studio was rudimentary. Christian had taken a loan from a friend, Robin Hammond, to purchase his current screenprinting equipment.<sup>9</sup> The exposure darkroom section of the studio was constructed just prior to Hodgins' visit.

Hodgins came to work on *The Johannesburg Centenary Portfolio*, which comprised work by himself, Guiseppe Cattaneo, Ezrom Legae, Karel Nel and Malcolm Payne. On Hodgins' arrival, he discovered that he had the incorrect dimensions for his Centenary print, so his preliminary drawings and paintings were of no help. In addition, he had been told that he could work in any print medium, and had decided on lithography, but found that due to the constraints of the size of the edition run, he could work only in screenprint.

Despite this difficult start, Christian proved himself a flexible and competent screenprinter.<sup>10</sup> Hodgins' image, *Encounter*<sup>11</sup>, shows areas of printed vivid colour, varying from flat planes to the organically textured patches, which do resemble lithographic marks. The forms of the figures, described by thick, irregular lines, clearly show the artist's expressive use of brush and ink on the transparency. By contrast, Guiseppe Cattaneo's work, *The Gable*, is a meticulously drawn print, demonstrating the large range of subtle tones that screenprint is capable of achieving in the hands of an accomplished artist and skilful printer. Seven screens alone were used to attain the sophisticated variations in the blue of the sky. Despite its monochromatic appearance, Ezrom Legae's *Quarter to Twelve to Implosion* was printed in eight colours and is reminiscent of the works in pencil and oil wash that Legae favoured at that time of his career.

In working with these Johannesburg artists, Christian proved that his Press was as accessible from Johannesburg as it was from Durban. Encouraging his ex-colleagues from the University of the Witwatersrand to travel to KwaZulu-Natal to work at the Press, Christian began printing with William Kentridge, Deborah Bell, Clive van den Berg, Penny Siopis, Colin Richards and other Transvaal-based artists. In addition, Durban artists such as Andrew Verster and, later, Jeremy Wafer began to visit the Press.

Between 1985 and 1990 Christian worked on a contract basis, and the studio's facilities advanced gradually as funds from contracts came in. Hodgins' disappointment at being unable to use lithography for his Centenary print prompted Christian to obtain a small Greig lithographic press in 1986. When the Press opened, Andrew Verster donated the Hunter Penrose manual etching



press that he had bought from Christian when he moved to Johannesburg, and Christian also purchased an enamel soaking tray from Durban. The existing acid booth was constructed in March 1986 after the completion of *The Centenary Portfolio*, as well as a solvent booth, as Christian wished to create as non-toxic a working environment as possible.

The following year, Christian obtained a complete framing facility from a retiring framer in Howick. Initially, he framed prints himself, keeping to conservation standards. His idea at that stage was to develop a centre dedicated to paper with fine art printmaking, with a facility for conservation framing and paper restoring as an adjunct to the Press.

In 1989, Christian set up The Caversham Press Print Collector, to encourage a market for fine art prints. The Print Collector member paid an annual fee, received a free miniature print<sup>12</sup> and was given the opportunity to purchase any of five commissioned editions a year by a variety of artists, at a 33% discount of the published price. This gained considerable popularity for a period, and works by artists such as William Kentridge, Andrew Verster, Derrick Nxumalo and Margaret Vorster were offered. Unfortunately, partly due to the tightening of the market in the mid-1990s, the number of members declined, and the Print Collector scheme no longer exists.

Alan Crump, Chairman of the Standard Bank National Arts Festival Committee, approached Christian to mount a retrospective exhibition at the Festival in Grahamstown in 1990, showing the first five years of work from The Caversham Press. This was a successful show, comprising 93 prints, which travelled extensively, after which Christian decided that The Caversham Press should function as a co-operative press.<sup>13</sup>

While operating on a publisher/contract basis, Christian had been able to print mainly with artists who could afford the studio publishing costs. He hoped that by introducing a co-operative the studio would open up to a wider field of artists. He enlisted the aid of Julia Meintjies to represent him in Johannesburg. With her art historical background, and contacts made during her employment at the Johannesburg Art Gallery, Meintjies' help was invaluable as she promoted The Caversham Press and developed a client base. Once the Press was functioning fully as a co-operative, she helped with the marketing of prints until her move to the Northern Cape in 1994.<sup>14</sup> Between 1994 and 2000, I was the Gauteng representative and on my resignation, Glenda Andrew<sup>15</sup> took over this position from 2001.



As a result of the success of the 1990 retrospective exhibition, Crump, again on behalf of the Standard Bank National Arts Festival Committee, commissioned Christian to produce a suite of prints to commemorate ten years of the Standard Bank Young Artist of the Year Award. This portfolio, entitled *Decade of Young Artists*, comprised one large-scale screenprint and two smaller scale prints in the medium of their choice by each recipient of the award. Although Christian was commissioned to print only the large screenprints, he also published the smaller prints for most of the artists.

As only three of the ten participating recipients of the Young Artist Award had made prints on a regular basis, this was a challenging project for Christian. He maintains that often artists with little printmaking experience are unaware of, and therefore not daunted by technical limitations, thus producing exciting imagery that pushes the boundaries of printmaking.

Marion Arnold, although known primarily as a painter, had worked with Christian at The Caversham Press previously. Her large print, *Incident*, was layered by applying flat marks and patterned patches on her transparencies (*Decade of Young Artists* catalogue 1991:5). Gavin Younge, whose metal sculpture was essentially monochromatic, decided to use the project as an opportunity to extend his visual language. Screenprinting allowed him to experiment with and introduce colour, producing the image, *Flight*, containing an unexpected decorative quality (*Decade of Young Artists* catalogue 1991:6). Although ceramic sculptors Feé Halsted-Berning and Bonnie Ntshalintshali from Ardmore were joint recipients for 1990, their styles differed considerably, as is reflected in the graphic works produced for this project, *Arrival* and *Jonah* respectively. Screenprinting allowed each artist to explore her usual working method but in two-dimensional form.

The *Decade of Young Artists* portfolio was shown at the 1991 Standard Bank National Arts Festival in Grahamstown and travelled extensively throughout the country. It was the Press' first significant co-operative project, and was extremely successful financially. The profit generated from this project enabled Christian to purchase a new larger Sawyer etching press. He also replaced the Greig lithographic press with a Manfield manual press and a plate grainer.

In addition, Christian built an extension wing to the studio. It provided accommodation facilities for artists to stay either simultaneously or with overlapping schedules. Christian maintains that



this extra space was more significant even than the purchasing of equipment, as it ultimately led to the development of the Press as a place of interaction.<sup>16</sup>

In 1992, Marion Arnold, as the visual arts committee member of the Standard Bank National Arts Festival, proposed an exhibition entitled *Art Meets Science: Flowers as Images*. She suggested that The Caversham Press should contribute a suite of prints.

This project featured a larger range of printmaking methods than before, and Christian encouraged the artists to experiment with more than one technique. Karel Nel used lithography to build up rich areas of pattern, detail and tone in *Boat of the Oblivious Bloom*, whereas Derek Nxumalo's image, *Manor Garden*, exploits the flat, hard-edge quality of screenprint. The botanist, John Manning, made a hand-coloured lithograph, *Datura*, which was similar in style to his usual work. Andrew Verster was working at the Press at the same time as Manning, and his work inspired Manning to attempt screenprinting, which resulted in his print *Gloriosa Superba*. Interaction between visiting artists, however disparate their styles and interests, was a common occurrence at Caversham, and contributed to the Press's creative ethos.

A development from the botanical project was a five-year undertaking between Christian and Douglas Goode<sup>17</sup> to create a limited edition, handmade book entitled *The Cycads Collection: Volume I: Natal Province*.<sup>18</sup> In 1994, Christian purchased a Vandercook Universal III Letterpress proofing press to handprint the text for this book. On attending the Oxford Conference of Designer Bookbinders, Christian met typographer Alan Dodson, who assisted him with the finer points of page design. Both the inspiration provided by this conference and the work that this book provoked formed the embryo of Christian's later concept of The Caversham Press as a creative centre for writers as well as artists.

In 1993, two significant events occurred in the development of The Caversham Press. The first was Christian's employment of Simon Zuma, a young man from the Lidgetton area, as a studio assistant. Initially, Christian intended that Zuma should learn to use the framing equipment, but on realising his potential, began to train him as a printmaking assistant. Christian began Zuma's apprenticeship with screenprinting instruction, then taught him about lithography, and finally etching. Christian maintains that the repetitive nature of printmaking processes is conducive to training people who have an aptitude for learning processes that require methodical implementation and an understanding of the final product requirements.



The other important event of 1993 was the registration of The Caversham Press Educational Trust. The aim of the Trust, which is non-profit, is to allow local, historically disadvantaged artists the experience of printmaking in a structured and professional way, while at the same time interacting with more established artists. Educational Trust printmaking workshops incorporate concentrated blocks of teaching in all the traditional techniques, with an emphasis on professional studio practice and the production of technically competent, marketable prints. To date, 65 young artists have participated in this project. Financial assistance for the Trust comes from both sponsorship and the sale of this project's prints, which are fed into the co-operative marketing system of The Caversham Press. With the agreement of the artists, funds received from print sales are divided between the artist and the Trust, ensuring the continuation of the educational programme.<sup>19</sup>

Leading up to the formation of the Educational Trust, Christian had held a series of informal workshops at The Caversham Press with artists training in community arts programmes, for example the African Arts Centre in Durban. Established artists from these groups, such as Shakes Buthelezi, Thami Jali and Sfiso Mkame, began to bring young, often self-taught artists to the Press, and the Educational Trust served to structure and formalise printmaking programmes.

In 1994, looking for a focus for the Educational Trust workshops, Christian submitted a proposal to the Standard Bank National Arts Festival Committee that he publish a suite of prints which celebrated traditional African myths and narrative. The proposal for an exhibition to be shown in 1995 at a venue in Grahamstown was accepted, and the title *The Spirit of our Stories* was devised. This project generated a great variety of images and stories, which further strengthened Christian's desire to combine image with text.

Twenty-three participating artists visited the Press, producing a suite of 54 works over a nine-month period. The traditional storyteller Gcina Mhlophe provided stories that were used by the four participating Educational Trust artists. A facilitator and two trainees from the Dakawa Art Centre<sup>20</sup> took part, as did seven ceramic painters from the Ardmore Ceramic Art Studio<sup>21</sup> near Winterton, and six established artists from all over the country.

Previously, Educational Trust artist Sthembiso Sibisi had made a small hand-coloured lithograph and a larger screenprint at the Press. For the project, Christian suggested that he produce a



combination screenprint lithograph, in part to reduce the labour intensity of hand-colouring, but also because Christian admired Sibisi's competent handling of tones. With this method, the lithographic edition is printed first, and then the artist makes screenprint transparencies for overprinting with transparent colour. In the resulting image, *Precious Gift*, the lithographic technique demonstrates Sibisi's drawing skills, and the subtle overprinting of cool colour enhances the subject matter. In addition, the artist made a separate linocut print and two etchings.

Edith Bukani from Dakawa Art Centre made marks on the transparencies to simulate the devices used in crayon drawing, from loose over-working to wax resist and scratching. The ink colours used for the layered separations are of the unblended, found colours of oil pastel, causing her print *Strict Parents* to maintain the simplicity of her drawings. Although Mmagabo Helen Sebidi is a well-established painter who also has made many etchings, her large print, *Lebelo, Le a jelwa*, and the two smaller works made for this project, were only her second experience in screenprinting.<sup>22</sup> Christian found that her knowledge of tone and colour relationships led to transparencies demonstrating her energetic and spontaneous style.

As there was a shortage of both space and time at Caversham during this project, Christian enlisted the help of Halsted-Berning and Ntshalintshali for the work done with the Ardmore artists. Under their guidance, these artists prepared their transparencies at the Ardmore Studio and then came to The Caversham Press for one day each to expose and then print their images. Wonderboy Nxumalo, a painter at Ardmore, used the same style and technique as for his ceramic works to produce his print *Making Fire Without Matches*. His ceramic work has large painted areas that are worked away with a *sgraffito* technique (Hobbs & Rankin 1997: 109). When making the dominant black transparency for his screenprint, Nxumalo painted a circle of solid drafting ink and then scratched away the ink with an etching needle and scalpel to create image and text in a reductive manner. Once it was printed in black and white, he made subsequent transparencies to colour areas of white paper that shone through. This is a similar approach to Sibisi's handling of colour in his combination lithograph-screenprint.

The *Spirit of our Stories* project provided a showcase for the Educational Trust artists, and consolidated the direction of the Trust. In addition, Simon Zuma proved his worth, not only by assisting with the printing, but in helping to explain, in Zulu, the processes to the many artists working in the studio. This portfolio attracted a positive response, and many of the works were purchased for private and corporate collections.<sup>23</sup>



Throughout the duration of this project, Christian was impressed by the work of Sthembiso Sibisi. He felt the young artist had a remarkable drawing facility, and approached his work in a serious manner. Christian invited him to become the first comprehensive printmaking student of the Educational Trust.<sup>24</sup> In addition, Wonderboy Nxumalo became a regular visitor to The Caversham Press, also under the umbrella of The Caversham Educational Trust.

Robert Hodgins, Deborah Bell and William Kentridge approached Christian in 1996, wishing him to publish their third collaborative portfolio, *Ubu Centenaire*<sup>25</sup>. Although their previous joint works had been contract publications, this portfolio fell under The Caversham Press co-operative system. However, it brought back the role of professional editioning, in which an entire edition must be printed in a short space of time.<sup>26</sup> The edition run was 50, and each artist created eight images, with Hodgins making an extra cover sheet with the portfolio title.

Despite the common theme, and the decision that each artist should work on eight A3-sized pieces of etching paper, each wished to incorporate their own particular styles and current thematic preoccupations. This differed from their first two portfolios, where all three artists employed intaglio methods, using the same sized plates.

Work for the project began at the Press in 1997. Hodgins chose to use a combination of lithography and screenprint, a medium he and Christian have refined over the years. Hodgins exploits the contrast between flat screenprinted areas of crisp, vivid colour, and his more organic approach to drawing on stone, as demonstrated by his print *South Africa 197? - Interrogator*.

Bell's *oeuvre* includes large ceramic sculptures, the surfaces of which she textures and burnishes, and large scale drawings in charcoal and pastel, over patches of rich colour. Wanting to obtain these effects in her printed image, Bell combined soft ground etching and drypoint on copper with *chin collé*. Her surface treatment of the copper plate simulates the surface treatment of her sculptures. The technique of *chin collé* was selected, as she wished the colour areas to produce the effect of being an integral part of the paper.<sup>27</sup> Bell's drawings, although large, have a fragmentary impression, so she did not wish to work in the traditional manner of the copper plate being smaller than the paper. Consequently, her plate size was slightly larger than the paper, and the image bleeds off the deckle edge. Thus the artist's eight prints appear as eight related fragments of a greater whole.



At the time that he was working on this portfolio, Kentridge made a series of charcoal drawings, with crude white chalk superimpositions. To create this effect with etching, Kentridge and Christian used two plates per image. One was a traditional plate etching, worked in hard and soft ground, aquatint and drypoint, and inked in black to resemble his charcoal drawing; and the other, a coarse engraving, worked with a Dremel drill on perspex, inked in white and superimposed onto the printed etching. The print *Act II Scene I*, commonly known as *The Shower*, shows how Kentridge created tone on the autographic figure by impressing his thumbprint into the soft ground on the plate, and etching it in stages. The stark whiteness of the crude engraving contrasts with the richness of the subtle black aquatint.

The printing of Bell and Kentridge's edition runs proved complicated and labour-intensive. Under usual circumstances, the *chin collé* technique that Bell chose is used for monoprints, or small edition runs, while with Kentridge's double plates, problems were experienced with paper shrinkage between the black and white printings. To add to the pressure, the release of this portfolio coincided with the upsurge of international interest in Kentridge's career,<sup>28</sup> leading to an unexpectedly high and sudden demand for the portfolio.

Despite the stress created by this situation, however, two benefits for Christian followed. It was the first time that a contemporary South African artist had exhibited solo in the international arena, with a body of prints produced at The Caversham Press. Furthermore, the three artists had an exhibition of their collaborative works at the Johannesburg Art Gallery during the 1997 Johannesburg Biennale. The largest portion of that work featured the three portfolios produced at The Caversham Press: *Hogarth in Johannesburg*, *Little Morals* and *Ubu Centenaire*.

In 1997, Christian revisited the United Kingdom, attending a fine art book symposium, and met the English bookbinder Alan Winstanley. On returning to Kwazulu-Natal, he was offered the opportunity to obtain bookbinding equipment from a retiring binder in Cape Town. Thanks to a donation from the Royal Netherlands Embassy, Christian was able to purchase the complete facility,<sup>29</sup> which is housed at the Press beside the framing apparatus, on the upper floor of the church building. Winstanley visited The Caversham Press in early 1998, and gave Christian some advanced training in hand bookbinding.<sup>30</sup>



Christian first met Sister Sheila Flynn in 1995. Flynn is a Dominican nun and artist, who co-ordinated outreach programmes in papermaking and simple bookbinding techniques in the Winterveld, under the auspices of her employer, Technikon Witwatersrand. After she had visited the Press with me in 1997, Christian decided that he would like to utilise his bindery in part for Education Trust workshops. Since 1998, Johan Maree and Keith Seafort, book and paper conservators from The University of Cape Town, have run an annual bookbinding workshop for these artists at The Caversham Press, furthering Christian's interest in the printed image and the printed word.

Since this first workshop, Christian has encouraged visiting artists to produce small edition artists' books, combining printing with hand binding to create sculptural books. One such book is a screenprinted concertina edition called *Ubu – Limericks and Clerihews*<sup>31</sup> featuring text and images made in 1998 by Hodgins. Christian's interest in combining text with imagery, the culmination of several small projects over the years, has developed from a love for paper and printing processes into a desire to create a centre for artists and writers.

Thus began the process to register The Caversham Creative Centre, which had The Caversham Press as its core founding structure. In 1997, through the fund-raising efforts of a former Print Collector member John Samuels, Christian obtained a generous donation from the W. W. Kellogg Foundation, Africa Programme. This donation was twofold: to begin building up an infrastructure for the proposed Centre<sup>32</sup> and to set some pilot projects into motion.

The pilot projects that Christian established were an Artist of Promise Award; a specialist residency; a graduate assistant's residency; an outreach programme; and an artists' dialogue residency. It was hoped that these would become annual projects, running alongside the usual press publications.

The Artist of Promise Award was designed to enable a young, local, historically disadvantaged artist the opportunity to create prints for a first solo exhibition. The recipient takes up residence in the studio apartment. The time frame of residence is flexible and dependent on the artist's other commitments. The 1999 recipient was Sthembiso Sibisi.

The specialist residency allows for an international expert in a field of printmaking to hold a workshop at The Caversham Press with local artists and art educators. The emphasis is on



skills-sharing and the opportunity for participants to produce their own work. The first such workshop, in collagraph, was held by Peter Jones of the D.I.T. School of Art in Dublin, Ireland in 1999. In 2000, Lynne Allen of Rutgers University, USA, held a colour-plate lithography workshop, after first helping Christian to establish this facility at The Caversham Press.

The graduate assistant's residency allows a senior printmaking student from an international formal institution the opportunity to work with Christian on the production of other residency projects, thereby experiencing the many aspects in the daily running of a professional printmaking studio. The student's travelling is self-sponsored, but accommodation and food costs are covered, and he or she is paid a small stipend. The 1999 assistant, who spent a month at the Press, was Sean Strohle, a final year printmaking and painting major from Rutgers University, USA.

Two outreach programmes were run in Durban in 1999, each facilitated by Flynn. One programme was a Paper Prayers Aids Awareness papermaking and print workshop, attended primarily by educators, health workers and social workers. The other entailed a basic bookbinding and print workshop for the Mapula Embroidery Group from the Winterveldt Adult Education Centre. Flynn, now based at the Press, is developing an outreach programme, under the funding umbrella of The Caversham Centre (until 2001).

One of the most exciting new developments at The Caversham Press was the establishment of the artists' dialogue residency. The concept behind this residency was the fostering of exchange and interaction through creative work. Fifteen women artists attended the pilot project for the residency, from April to July in 1999. The name of the creative brief given them was *Icons for the Millenium: A Woman's Vision*. Three women artists at a time spent up to three weeks at the Press. This first residency was entitled *The Hourglass Project*, and this has become the generic name for future dialogue residencies.

Nine participating artists were from Southern Africa,<sup>33</sup> two were from Ireland and four from the USA. Each artist had to produce one large print, in any print medium, approximately 100 x 70 cm, for the portfolio and one miniature print, no larger than 7,5 x 7,5 cm. In addition, a hand-bound, concertina book, containing screenprinted portraits of the participating artists, drawn by one of the other artists, was produced from this dialogue.



Not all the participants were familiar with printmaking procedures, and Christian chose to challenge some of the artists technically. The methods ranged from straightforward screenprinting to elaborate print combinations. Patricia Hurl, a painter from Dublin, had to reign in her usual spontaneous way of working in order to plan the colour and tonal separations for her screenprint *Tireanna*. She maintains that she found the task of working through the tones and colours of a completed composition to be a valuable experience (*The Hourglass Project* catalogue 1999:6). Sheila Flynn, who usually works with the more tactile medium of collagraph, making small variable editions, was encouraged to make a rubbing from her initial collagraph block and transfer this image to screenprint. The title of her print, *Bone Doings and Memories*, was partly related to rubbings that she took from the gravestones in The Caversham Press garden. Lynne Allen, an experienced master printer, took the opportunity to collaborate with Christian in producing the complex print *My Winter Count* using screenprint, lithograph, linocut and *collé* to create her image.

This project resulted in a collection of 30 prints, as well as the portrait book. It formed the first exhibition of the Millenium in the Lowe Gallery in Atlanta, Georgia, USA, proceeding to Rutgers University in 2001. The exhibition was shown for the first time in South Africa at the 2000 Standard Bank National Arts Festival in Grahamstown, and travelled throughout South Africa during 2001.

More significantly, the success of *The Hourglass Project* enabled Christian to obtain further sponsorship for the newly established Caversham Creative Centre. As a result, Christian is able to function further without specific consideration of the art market, concentrating his main attention on innovative processes and creative interaction among visiting artists. The removal of financial pressures has led Christian into his area of greatest strength: the development of well-planned and imaginative print projects, featuring sophisticated and exciting work of technical excellence.

Christian and his Caversham Press have come a long way from their first project, featuring the work of five established male artists from Johannesburg to the most recent featuring the work of 15 women artists from Southern Africa and other continents. Patricia Hurl, one of the *Hourglass* participants, best sums up the unique character of The Caversham Press in her writings (*The Hourglass Project* catalogue 1999:6):

I have time here ... to notice things. Nature plays a huge role in life at Caversham. I am woken to the sounds of birds ... the two dogs and six cats are company against the loneliness, which is an essential part of this experience. There is a monastic quality ... emphasized by the benign presence of the graves in the garden, which are a constant reminder of the history of this place ... I feel like a student again. There is a lovely sense of freedom from responsibility ... all that is expected from us is to make art...

---

#### ENDNOTES: CHAPTER TWO

<sup>1</sup> Although Christian enjoys teaching, he maintains that he found the fragmentary nature of lecturing in an institution frustrating. He finds more satisfaction in working one-on-one with an artist or student, preferring to complete a project over a shorter period of concentrated time.

<sup>2</sup> The residence was designed by Robert Brusse.

<sup>3</sup> Alan Crump was the Head of the Fine Arts Department at the University of the Witwatersrand. Christopher Till was the Director for the Johannesburg Art Gallery. The Brenthurst Press consists of the library and the publishing arm of the Harry Oppenheimer Collection and one of its functions is to produce work for this collection.

<sup>4</sup> The Johannesburg Centenary Portfolio comprised work by Guiseppe Cattaneo, Robert Hodgins, Ezrom Legae, Karel Nel and Malcolm Payne. The works were silkscreens on 290 gms Fabriano Rosapina, with Nel's print including a collaged element. Christian was to be responsible only for the printed images. The portfolio was presented in a solander box, covered with book cloth and lined with acid-free paper, made by a commercial printer from Cape Town (Frontispiece: *Johannesburg Centenary Portfolio*). Cynthia Kemp, at that time working for the Brenthurst Press, arranged the final editing and publication.

<sup>5</sup> Alan Crump, and the University of the Witwatersrand network, frequently supported The Caversham Press, especially in the early years of the Press's existence.

<sup>6</sup> Hereafter referred to as *Art Meets Science*.

<sup>7</sup> Hereafter referred to as *Spirit of our Stories*.

<sup>8</sup> Hereafter referred to as *Ubu Centenaire*.

<sup>9</sup> All technical specifications for the equipment at The Caversham Press, mentioned in the body of the text, given in Appendix III.

<sup>10</sup> Since his beginnings as a professional printmaker, Christian has used a photographic method of



creating screenprint stencils. The artist, usually beginning with a sketch or painting, creates drawings on transparent film. These drawn areas, representing colour and tonal separations, are printed over each other to build up the final image.

The artist supervises the mixing of inks, deciding at each step of the printing process on the colour and translucency of the ink. More prints than the number of the final edition size are printed, to allow experimentation with different colours along the way. Often, once all the transparencies have been printed, the artist decides to make more transparencies, so as to lay down more colour or tone on the image. The final number of drawn transparencies per image is equivalent to the number of screens, or colours, used per print.

The transparencies are created using photo-dense inks such as drafting fluid or a photographic marker. The solid areas of colour, usually stylistically associated with screenprint, are painted directly onto the transparency. However, parts of the area may be lifted off with solvent or scratched into, or ink may be splattered onto the transparency, allowing a more textured area. Lithographic crayons and tusche worked onto the transparency produce softer, patchy tonal areas. Line elements may be regular and solid, or broken, soft or feathery. There is scope in this method to accommodate the most diverse styles. The mark made on the transparency is the mark of the artist, and this mark becomes the printed image.

<sup>11</sup> Full details of the prints mentioned in this chapter can be found in Appendix I.

<sup>12</sup> Throughout the year, a few artists were asked to produce these miniatures while making other work at the press. They donated the prints to Christian to use for this purpose.

<sup>13</sup> A co-operative press covers all production costs itself, from studio time to materials used, and even in certain instances, accommodation and board. The press then undertakes to market the prints produced, and on the sale of a print, the press keeps an agreed percentage of the price and the artist receives the rest.

<sup>14</sup> Throughout the history of The Caversham Press, many people, both in and out of the art world, have been extremely supportive by giving time and experience, sharing contacts and contributing financially to help sustain the continued existence of the Press. Christian has the ability to inspire people with his vision for a creative haven.

<sup>15</sup> Glenda Andrew, a keen supporter of The Caversham Press for several years, has been involved in the Johannesburg artworld through her husband, artist/printmaker and fine art educator David Andrew.

<sup>16</sup> A factor in determining the ethos of The Caversham Press is that, until 1999, artists staying at The Press shared in family meals. Although this was necessitated by the physical isolation of The Press, it functioned as a positive component of creative time. Over breakfast, the artist's intentions would be clarified. Morning studio time began the work process, while lunchtime served to assess progress. Four to five hours of concentrated work would follow. Over the evening meal, anecdotes and gossip were exchanged, thus insuring that, while Christian may be geographically isolated, he remained very much in touch with events in the art world. This balance between formal studio time and informal conversation made for satisfying creative exchange.

<sup>17</sup> Douglas Goode was one of the participating botanical artists – see Appendix I for full list of artists.



<sup>18</sup> This book is a collaboration between botanical artist, Douglas Goode, who produced a series of editions of hand-coloured lithographs; master printer, Malcolm Christian; John Comrie Greig, who wrote the text; book designer, Maria Criticos; and Johannesburg-based book-binder, Peter Carstens. The book edition is one hundred, of which numbers 1 to 20 comprise a full-colour edition and numbers 21 to 100 comprise a part-colour edition. Maria Criticos designed the book and advised on the typesetting. Peter Carstens, a specialist book-binder from Johannesburg, undertook to hand-bind the edition in batches of twenty in quarter-leather goatskin with hand sewn head and tailbands. Carstens also bound the matching slipcase (Archival material from The Caversham Press).

Neither Christian nor Goode realised the enormity of the task they were undertaking, and the full edition remains unfinished, primarily because the hand-colouring has not been completed.

<sup>19</sup> At 2000, The Board of Trustees included Robin Hammond (an accountant), Rupert Pardoe, Dikobe Martin, Elza Miles, Julia Meintjies and Andrew Verster. The donors of the Trust include Standard Bank, Anglo American and De Beer's Chairman's Fund, the Foundation for the Creative Arts, the Natal Arts Trust, the Tatham Gallery, the Department of Arts and Culture, W.W. Kellogg Foundation Africa Program and the Royal Netherlands Embassy.

<sup>20</sup> Dakawa is a training program based in Grahamstown, which at that time offered courses in textiles (painting and weaving), ceramics and the graphic arts.

<sup>21</sup> The Ardmore Ceramic Art Studio was established by Feé Halsted-Berning, on her farm, Ardmore, in 1985. She has a Fine Art and ceramic training. Bonnie Ntshalintshali was the first person to be trained in the studio. The studio provides skills training and legitimate employment for the Ardmore community, releasing some of the women from manual farm labour. Today, this studio is a viable business, producing both functional ceramic ware and ceramic sculpture for the local and international markets. (Scott, 1998).

<sup>22</sup> She was a participating artist in *Decade of Young Artists*, producing one large screenprint and two etchings at that time.

<sup>23</sup> More details in Chapter Three.

<sup>24</sup> From that time onwards, Sibisi visited the Caversham Press regularly, these sessions being funded by the Educational Trust, and began to explore the different printmaking media and their expressive qualities, developing a body of work in printmaking.

<sup>25</sup> They had collaborated previously on two other print portfolios, *Hogarth in Johannesburg* (1987), and *Little Morals* (1991).

<sup>26</sup> With screenprinting, the entire edition is printed up at the time of proofing, and then the screens cleaned off, to be used again for another image. However, because intaglio editioning is so labour-intensive and time-consuming, and the plate must be destroyed when the edition is complete, Christian usually prints only a few of the edition at a time (referring to his B.A.T. proof), on demand, often over a period of a few years. This also eases his paper costs and storage difficulties. Rigorous attention is paid to the documentation of edition numbers. B.A.T. is the abbreviation for *bon à tirer*, from the French meaning 'okay to print'. The B.A.T. print acts as a reference proof print while editioning.



---

<sup>27</sup> Bell used between one and three coloured paper elements per image, hand-colouring and tearing down Japanese mulberry paper into almost identical pieces for the edition run.

<sup>28</sup> More details in Chapter Three.

<sup>29</sup> Details in Appendix III.

<sup>30</sup> This visit coincided with the release of the *Cycad Book* at Sotheby's in Johannesburg, arranged by Cynthia Kemp.

<sup>31</sup> Robert Hodgins, *Ubu – Limericks and Clerihews* (1997). Handbound concertina-style book with screenprinted images, text set in Helvetica type, on Fabriano Rosapina 220 gms; closed size: 25,5 x 13,5 cm; edition of 75;

<sup>32</sup> The accommodation facilities for visiting artists were extended. Full details are given in Appendix III.

<sup>33</sup> Six artists were from South Africa, one from Venda and two from Zimbabwe.

## CHAPTER THREE

### SIX PRINTMAKING PROJECTS: SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHANGES IN THE ART MARKET 1985–2000

An interesting feature of contemporary South African art collections is that a significant section of most is comprised of prints, many of which originate from The Caversham Press.

It is acknowledged among printmakers internationally that a printmaking studio frequently has a 'style', reflecting either the interests or preferred technical procedures of its director.

However, this is not the case with The Caversham Press, except for Christian's strict adherence to a high technical standard of print production and meticulous documentation of the editions produced there. As discussed in the Introduction, Christian set a standard for printmaking in South Africa, directly causing prints to become as acceptable as paintings or drawings to a wide range of collectors while their relatively low cost often makes them more desirable.

The Caversham Press originally functioned on a contract basis, meaning that commissions were received for particular projects using specific artists. After 1990, The Caversham Press became a co-operative, and Christian invited the artists he wished to work with and he conceptualised project themes himself. From 1998, the Press began to receive grants for projects motivated by Christian. These three different ways of functioning had an impact on the manner in which the prints were released into the market.

As was noted in earlier chapters, the recent history of South African printmaking was politicised. Christian and other printmakers were aware of the current concerns of the artists with whom they collaborated. These concerns often related to specific social conditions in their environment, which in turn, reflected the concerns of society at large. If a print reflects contemporary social issues, how is it received in the art market?

The printmaker attempts to aid the artist in combining conceptual issues with the formal characteristics inherent in the chosen printmaking technique. Often, the selected technique mimics the artist's own recognised style, and is chosen for this reason; but sometimes, the shift from paint or sculpture into print produces an image not instantly identifiable as the artist's



style. Arising from this is another pertinent question - does an image sell because it is the work of a specific artist or because of the nature of the image itself?

These issues introduce the notion of fashion and market trends into the purchasing of artworks. In general, artists dislike acknowledging commercial aspects of their work, although marketers of artwork have a firm understanding of prevailing trends in buying. However, both marketer/dealer and artist are usually pleased if an artist's work gains in popularity, leading to the sales of their most recent works, followed by a demand by the purchasing public for more of the same. This issue gives rise to a third question: in collaborative printmaking projects, what are the considerations of the artists and printmakers when deciding on a theme, and how consciously do they consider the art market? Or if a project is commissioned, what does the client wish to gain from this act?

Artists achieving a level of commercial success, despite the obvious financial benefit, may, more importantly, gain endorsement in the art world and an acknowledgement of the significance of their creative concerns. So, to suggest some answers to these questions it is necessary to examine the range of purchasers of artworks and their motivation for buying one work over another. This, in itself, is often related to a response to social conditions; or the current popularity of a certain artist; and, by extension, fashion.

These issues will be discussed by referring to selected prints from six projects produced at The Caversham Press between 1985 and 2000. The dates, titles and participating artists are listed in full in Appendix I. The interaction between these prints and the Johannesburg art market may give some insight into the questions raised.

The Johannesburg Centenary Portfolio was the first portfolio produced by Christian at The Caversham Press. It was commissioned as an accompaniment to the *Johannesburg Art and Artists: Selections From A Century* exhibition,<sup>1</sup> shown at the Johannesburg Art Gallery from 1986 to 1987. Rayda Becker states: "in the metropolitan area of Johannesburg, there is on average one exhibition opening a day. This concentration of artistic activity establishes the position of this city within the mainstream of artmaking in South Africa. The Johannesburg Art Gallery is part of this process" (*Vita Art Now* catalogue 1988:1).<sup>2</sup>

The concept behind the portfolio was commemorative: a celebration of the centenary of the city of Johannesburg and the seventy-fifth anniversary of the laying of the original foundation stone to the Johannesburg Art Gallery; and an acknowledgment of Johannesburg as a major cultural



centre in South Africa. The five Johannesburg-based artists chosen as participants were considered to have contributed significantly to art in South Africa.

The project was not thematic, but there was an understanding that the artists' print images would be representative of their recent work. The three participating artists discussed here, as well as being highly regarded artists, were involved with aspects of art education in Johannesburg, and thus were considered to be influential with respect to young artists in the city.

Guiseppe Cattaneo and Robert Hodgins had received their art training in Europe<sup>3</sup> and Ezrom Legae had trained at community centres in Johannesburg.<sup>4</sup> Both Cattaneo and Hodgins had lectured at the University of the Witwatersrand,<sup>5</sup> and Legae had worked as an instructor at the Jubilee Art Centre, FUBA and had acted as Director of the African Music and Drama Association Art Project.<sup>6</sup>

At the time of the project, 1986, Hodgins was three years into his retirement from the academic world, and at the beginning of an upswing in his career as an artist. His influence on fellow academics and students at the University of the Witwatersrand was publicly acknowledged at the 1986 conference of the South African Association of Art Historians (Berman 1993: 313). That same year, his work had been shown in a retrospective exhibition as the guest artist at the Standard Bank National Festival of the Arts in Grahamstown. He also had an exhibition at the Goodman Gallery in Johannesburg (Berman 1993:313), which subsequently led to his becoming the Award Winner at the 1987 Vita Art Now Exhibition (*Vita Art Now* catalogue 1987).

He was influenced by the satirical approach to the human condition in the work of the post-World War I German artists George Grosz and Otto Dix (Berman 1993:312), responding to the depiction of greed and cruelty and the anonymity of its perpetrators. In 1983, Hodgins began to develop an interest in Alfred Jarry's figure of Ubu as a symbol of "the tyrant – the flawed yet vulnerable figure of authority" (Williamson & Jamal 1996:38). Hodgins has resisted literal readings of his work and maintains that it has never represented direct political protest; but that he works with an element of "automatism", alluding to literary work or history: "common cultural property"; but not with symbolism specifically. However, in the mid-1980s, his figures of patriarchy and the military resonated with the politically aware South African viewer (Hodgins & Powell 1996:5).



*Encounter*<sup>7</sup> demonstrates some of these characteristics. Two faceless figures, their features masked by sharp geometric shapes, interact with negative connotations. The male figure, in profile, hovers over that of the female in a manner both distant and controlling. This sense of harshness is enhanced by the use of complementary pink and green splatter work within the figures which are delineated in red, and the flat hard-edged planes of contrasting colour and black in the background. This screenprint was the first of many that would be produced at The Caversham Press, and is instantly recognisable as the work of Hodgins.

Despite a reduction in personal artistic output from 1971 to 1982, Cattaneo was considered to have played an important role in the development of his students (Berman 1983:90) and at the time of the Centenary Portfolio held the post of Senior Lecturer at the University of the Witwatersrand. In 1982, he was the Guest Artist at The Johannesburg Art Gallery and held a retrospective exhibition at the Market Gallery. In 1985, his work featured in the Tributaries Exhibition<sup>8</sup> (*Johannesburg Art and Artists* catalogue 1986:82).

Although the *oeuvre* of his earlier career is associated with non-figurative imagery, from 1982, Cattaneo began making assemblages of photographic images. His 1982 exhibition featured some photo-composite work (Berman 1983: 91). However, he became disillusioned with collage and began to integrate photographic images into his technical process (Berman 1993:275). *The Gable* is an architectural still life depicted with photographic accuracy. His usual painstaking attention to technical detail is reflected in this print, which forecast his starting to employ realistic representational imagery.

Cattaneo's work contains layers of personal allegory, and he encoded a growing number of symbols into his artworks. These symbols formed a personal iconography that had been built up throughout his career and were readily associated with his particular vision and humanist sympathies (Berman 1983:90). Two such symbols, metaphors for the human condition, are incorporated in this print: the single cypress tree and a wall with an opening.<sup>9</sup> Unlike Hodgins and Legae, there were no acknowledged political undertones in the work of Cattaneo.

In 1986, Legae was an established sculptor and draftsman, working as an artist full time. His graphic work first received widespread recognition in an exhibition held at the Goodman Gallery in 1978, called *The Chicken Series*. The works appear essentially monochromatic as Legae used pencil and oil wash or charcoal (De Jager 1992:115). *The Chicken Series* was the culmination of a subtle progression in his subject matter, beginning with the human figure and gradually transforming it into a fowl or bird-like skeleton (Berman 1983:256). He began to incorporate the cocoon into his visual vocabulary.<sup>10</sup> Legae's print, *Quarter to Twelve to*



*Implosion* features both the fowl and cocoon idioms; and the image, although screenprinted, mimics his usual palette, tonal range and even scale.

The Centenary Portfolio was exhibited alongside the *Johannesburg Art and Artists* exhibition. This four-part exhibition featured works from the permanent collection of the Johannesburg Art Gallery, or on loan from private collectors. It had four particular emphases: the establishment of an early art life in Johannesburg from 1886–1939; two popular artists, the painter W. H. Coetzer and sculptor Anton van Wouw; group-based art in Johannesburg from the 1950s to early 1970s; and artists from the Gallery's Guest Artist Project, which began in 1977.<sup>11</sup> Legae was representative of the third part of this exhibition,<sup>12</sup> and Cattaneo of the third and fourth parts.<sup>13</sup>

It must be noted that the invited participants for the Centenary Portfolio were male. In the early 1980s, the South African art world was still dominated by men, although there were many woman artists and arts administrators working at that time. Arnold maintains that, in response to political pressure to fight racial oppression, artists tended to overlook other areas of discrimination, such as gender (1996:15). 1985, the time of the planning of the *Johannesburg Art and Artists* exhibition, was seen as a significant year for women artists. The *Tributaries* exhibition featured a broader base of artists and types of creative work than had been seen previously in a single exhibition; and the *Woman Artists of South Africa* acknowledged the historical role played by women artists; almost half the artists featured in the Second Cape Triennial were women (Arnold 1996:60) and 20 of the 51 nominees for the 1987 Vita Art Now Award were women (*Vita Art Now Catalogue* 1987). In addition, Marion Arnold was the winner of the Standard Bank Young Artist Award, the first female recipient of this title.

Despite having had a female director, the Johannesburg Art Gallery appeared to be particularly entrenched in male-bias. Of the 16 participants in the Guest Artist Project from 1977 until 1985, only 4 were women. The Guest Artist in 1985 was Elizabeth Vels, a practising artist, painter and printmaker, and art educator in the formal and informal sector.<sup>14</sup> If, as the *Johannesburg Art and Artists* catalogue states (1986:64) “there is no order of preference in the choice of Guest Artist. All the artists have distinguished themselves professionally” then the question must be asked why Vels was not one of the invited artists to participate in the Centenary Portfolio.

The portfolio was a commission for The Caversham Press, which means that, on completion of the prints' production, Christian was paid his fee and his role in the project ended there. He had no responsibility regarding either the selection of participating artists or sales of the portfolio.



In fact, this portfolio was not aggressively marketed at the time of production. It was shown only at the Gallery, a non-commercial venue. The project had been sponsored,<sup>15</sup> and so there was, presumably, no financial impetus to sell the portfolio actively. Portfolios were offered for purchase to members of the Friends of the Johannesburg Art Gallery. However, in the mid-1990's, as a clearing of the archives at The Johannesburg Art Gallery was commenced, a large number of the portfolios were discovered, and offered for sale to known collectors.<sup>16</sup>

It may seem surprising that this portfolio was not in demand by collectors at the time of production – in today's art market, such a body of work would be. It featured the work of five established artists, who had made images in their known idiom; and was offered at a reasonable price<sup>17</sup> and the prints were of a high technical standard. However, at that point, there were few serious collectors of fine art prints by contemporary South African artists,<sup>18</sup> and confusion reigned regarding the difference between original prints and reproductions. Artists such as J. H. Pierneef and Gregoire Boonzaire had made relief prints; and in the 1960s and 1970s, Egon Guenther<sup>19</sup> and Bruce Attwood<sup>20</sup> had produced prints for the like of the Amadlozi Group<sup>21</sup> and artists such as Judith Mason; but in the 1980s, the buying public associated local prints with community workshops rather than established artists. As The Centenary Portfolio was Christian's first commercial project, his Press was an unknown quantity for the art market.

By the time of the second commissioned portfolio, *Decade of Young Artists*, The Caversham Press was well established within the South African fine art arena.<sup>22</sup> The *Decade of Young Artists* portfolio was also commemorative in nature, the idea conceived by Alan Crump to celebrate the first ten years of the Standard Bank Young Artist of the Year Award, from 1981 to 1991. This had become one of the most prestigious awards in South Africa. The recipient would not necessarily have obtained widespread recognition previously, but, as a result of the award, would receive broad exposure for their work and enhancement of their career. The award is presented to an artist considered to have shown professional dedication and to be committed to the production of work of a continuing high standard over a period of years (*Decade of Young Artists* catalogue 1991:1).

An investigation of the work and areas of interest of the later recipients of this award, from 1981 until 1991, gives an indication of the dramatic shifts in the South African art world during this ten-year period. There was a move from a male-dominated establishment, with creative concerns rooted in the legacy of modernism to a more inclusive postmodern acceptance of the work of male and female artists, black and white, engaging with topics such as feminist issues, political oppression, traditional values versus urban life, and the numerous debates that had sprung up surrounding art and craft.



In 1985, Arnold was the first woman to receive the award. She had exhibited with groups in Zimbabwe and South Africa, and in two-person and solo shows; worked as an art-historian, writer and critic,<sup>23</sup> and had lectured at UNISA from 1979. As a committed feminist, and actively involved in the South African Association of Art Historians,<sup>24</sup> she did much to encourage debate around historical and contemporary feminist issues in the arts.<sup>25</sup>

However, despite describing her own art-making perspective as that of “a white woman in Africa, with a Western education and cultural heritage” (*UNISA Art Lecturers* catalogue 1986:7), Arnold’s work was not overtly politically feminist or dogmatic, but more related to aspects of female life. Working predominantly with still life and landscape in the 1980s, her still life paintings depict African and European objects, such as teacups and decorative gourds owned by the artist; and patterned cloths and doilies, referring to domestic concerns. Their juxtaposition alludes to the artist’s self-positioning (Alexander & Cohen 1990:156).

It was Arnold’s belief that, in a western art historical context, landscape painting and the use of decorative elements in image-making was considered appropriate subject matter for women artists and thus of secondary significance and she questioned this hierarchy of subjects and its culturally derived origins. Her large screenprint, *Incident*, is built up of fundamental landscape elements transformed into areas of overlapping pattern, with a decorative border. The essential flatness of screenprint enhances both this method of image construction and her use of a decoratively patterned border (*Decade of Young Artists* catalogue 1991:5) which metaphorically alerts the viewer to issues of framing.

Gavin Younge was the award recipient in 1986, and from the late-1970s was firmly entrenched in the arena of protest art, concerned with the specificity of South African socio-political conditions. However, much of his work deals with the emotions engendered by these conditions: a sense of disquiet and anxiety concerning violence (*Decade of Young Artists* catalogue 1991:6). Williamson states: “Younge’s work has always been characterised by an intelligent and careful scrutiny of issues and consideration of the appropriateness of method and materials.”, while Younge is quoted as saying: “The art world is intolerant of debate over issues of accountability.” (Williamson 1989:68).

In 1986, Younge was using corrugated iron in his sculptural work, which was cast in bronze, and therefore appeared monumental and monochromatic. *Flight* has the effect of a relief panel. Using photographs of fish shapes cut from corrugated metal, and superimposed with pink roses, Younge has used the layering techniques of screenprint to create the illusion of collage. The



corrugated metal is immediately associated with informal housing, and Younge uses the fish as a metaphor for escape (*Decade of Young Artists* catalogue 1991:3). The pink of the roses, which appear artificial, adds an unexpectedly lighthearted quality to his usual sombre palette.

At the time of receiving the award, Younge was lecturing at the University of Cape Town. He was researching his own area of interest, contemporary art from the black townships, both urban and rural. This research culminated in the publication in 1988 of his book, *Art of the South African Townships*. Whereas Williamson's book of the following year, *Resistance Art in South Africa*, dealt with black and white artists working specifically in modes of protest,<sup>26</sup> Younge's book purported to show the diversity of styles and range of mediums and themes coming out of the townships.<sup>27</sup>

In 1988, when Younge's book was published, an exhibition was held at The Johannesburg Art Gallery - *The Neglected Tradition: Towards a New History of South African Art (1930 – 1988)*.<sup>28</sup> The publication in the same year of the exhibition's catalogue and Younge's book provided a sudden flood of information about the lives and work of black artists, both historic and current. Later, more information was added with the 1989 publication of Nettleton and Hammond-Tooke's *African Art in Southern Africa: From Tradition to Township*.

All three publications sparked off much academic debate.<sup>29</sup> One area of discussion related to the significance of artefacts produced for traditional tribal rituals or daily use compared to the urban experience of many young black artists, which provoked another argument around the issue of high art (fine art) and low art (craft or functional art), with demands made for the acceptance of both as legitimate outlets for the creative impulse. Controversy reigned in the art world in relation to categorising township and protest/resistance arts for the purposes of marketing artwork. In particular, all these issues raised debate regarding the oft-perceived exploitation of new or rural artists by the commercial art market.

As a result of the politicised nature of art in South Africa, there were demands for a form of creative equality; for example, that crafts, such as ceramics and fabric work, be given a similar status to fine art; and that works by informally educated artists be viewed with the same respect as works by formally educated artists. This extended to the allowance of a certain leeway regarding the medium of artworks, as many black artists could not afford expensive materials, working with found and recycled materials. In addition, the springing up of community art centres and craft-orientated self-help groups led to an understanding of the nature of collaboration in creative endeavours.



This thinking paved the way for the 1990 Standard Bank Young Artist of the Year Award to be given jointly to Feé Halsted-Berning and Bonnie Ntshalintshali. Halsted-Berning, a formally trained artist, painter and ceramicist, established the Ardmore Ceramic Studio at her farm in Natal in 1985. Ntshalintshali, the daughter of a farm worker with no art training, came to assist her. Halsted-Berning realised that Ntshalintshali had a special feeling for clay and decoration, so encouraged her to create clay sculptures and decorate them with paint (*Standard Bank Young Artist Award 1990 catalogue*).

The two women shared a studio, producing work that was completely different. Halsted-Berning made ceramic relief panels, embossed, carved and heavily-glazed, using personal objects and family photographs as subject matter. Ntshalintshali used stories as subject matter, either traditional legend or Old and New Testament Bible stories, creating small clay-modelled figures and props, transformed into the contemporary characters that inhabited her daily life. She created sculptural columns and stage sets with a South African context. Formally, she was inspired by the stacked images of Yoruba house posts and mediaeval church friezes shown to her by Halsted-Berning who devised the multi-piece column structure as a means of firing in a relatively small kiln. Halsted-Berning provided books as source material and technical assistance relating to firing and promoted Ntshalintshali's career with her network of contacts (*Standard Bank Young Artist Award 1990 catalogue*).

From the mid-1980s, although the two artists showed work in the same exhibitions, Ntshalintshali's received more widespread recognition: hers was shown in *The Neglected Tradition* exhibition, she was nominated for the Vita Art Now Award in 1991 and her work was sought after by collectors, corporate and private, international and local. It could be argued that Ntshalintshali received her part of the Award for purely artistic achievement whereas Halsted-Berning received her part for her initiative and administrative skills in setting up the Ardmore Ceramic Studio.<sup>30</sup>

Halsted-Berning's print *Arrival* is a visually dense work, demonstrating the artist's spontaneous approach to textured mark-making. Her layering of screenprinted colour echoes the painting and glazing of her ceramics, and the embossed border refers to her usual style of creating an integral ceramic frame on her clay relief works. Ntshalintshali's image *Jonah* was inspired by her own sculpture of the same name. The contour lines of the sculpture are translated into a simple screenprinted line and some areas demonstrate use of the highly decorative patterning associated with her work. Flat areas of bright colour refer to the portions of her sculpture that are coiled hollow for firing.



Interestingly, three of these four works employ the convention of adding a visual patterned frame that is integral to the image. The formal convention of framing imagery can be considered as an entrance into a set of ideals or into the artist's specific viewpoint. Arnold uses a patterned frame as an invitation to consider the feminist debate regarding women artists' use of decoration and the traditional assumption that such work has secondary value (*Decade of Young Artists* catalogue 1991:5). Younge uses the packing box frame – which also alludes to shack dwelling – in a socio-political context, as a means to contain the fish, his symbol for escape (*Decade of Young Artists* catalogue 1991:10). Halsted-Berning uses a frame as a formal device, to mimic the ceramic frames of her relief panels, sourced often from family photographs which allude to fragments of experience (*Standard Bank Young Artist Award 1990* catalogue). Ntshalintshali's image, a representation of her freestanding sculpture, floats freely, framed only by the paper's edge. This was her first exploration of two-dimensional art, and her lack of knowledge regarding formal conventions allowed her unwittingly to exploit the particular characteristic that screenprint offers for an irregular format.

By 1991 there was a better understanding generally of the nature of fine art printmaking, and an easier acceptance of South African prints by local collectors. This is attested to by the fact that, in 1991, The Caversham Press had been in existence for six years, and three more private, professional printmaking studios had opened: Hard Ground Studio, Cape Town, and The Artists' Press, Johannesburg, in 1990, and Artist Proof Studio, Johannesburg, in 1991.

The *Decade of Young Artists* prints were exhibited at the 1991 Standard Bank National Festival of the Arts. Christian actively marketed the portfolio. He had decided that henceforth, The Caversham Press should function as a co-operative, and began to work with a marketing agent, the first being Julia Meintjies. Meintjies had many contacts in the art world, due to her years working at the Johannesburg Art Gallery, and had assisted with the curation of corporate collections. In general, the art market was buoyant. Corporations were beginning to look at new work for their collections and the national galleries and institutions had budgets for new acquisitions.

In addition, the Johannesburg Art Gallery was staffed by ex-fine art students from the University of the Witwatersrand. By word of mouth, a network of politically aware young professionals began to develop an interest in the art world, which appeared to be addressing social issues of concern to them. Some were from families who had collected art in the past, and were eager to begin personal collections of contemporary South African art. Fine art prints were an inexpensive way to begin.



This portfolio made an excellent showcase for The Caversham Press, as the prints were technically superb and the artists were among the most significant working in South Africa at that time. The prints discussed from this portfolio are stylistically reminiscent of the artists' genres and the fact that the edition sizes had been kept small – 14 for the large screenprints and between 20 and 40 for the others – meant that demand could not be filled. The editions sold out completely in a relatively short time, which had the effect of creating a desire in the market for more prints of the same quality. A result of this portfolio, and of working with Meintjies, was that a firm client base was established for future work. In addition, the network of artists wishing to work at The Press increased.

*The Decade of Young Artists* portfolio positioned The Caversham Press as a significant role-player in the fine art arena. However, quality of printing and participating artists alone do not determine the commercial success of a project. Consideration has to be given to the trends of art-buyers.

In 1992, an exhibition at the Standard Bank National Festival of the Arts was *Art Meets Science: Flowers as Images*. Although this may seem an arbitrary theme in a year of political turmoil,<sup>31</sup> Arnold justifies the choice, stating (*Art Meets Science* catalogue 1992:17-18):

In South Africa the green debate is beginning to be heard...Ethnobotany needs serious and unemotional study as South Africa tries to correlate Third World practices with First World environmental concerns, and both of these with political rights for all peoples...How can the political implications of land ownership in a changing South Africa be reconciled with inculcating mass environmental awareness?

The Caversham Press contributed a suite of prints towards this exhibition. Christian decided to combine work by botanical artists and fine artists. Gillian Condy of the National Botanical Institute suggested the botanical artists, as Christian was not familiar with the individual artists' work, and Christian invited the fine artists.<sup>32</sup> Although making images of flowers was historically considered to have been the domain of woman artists (*Art Meets Science* catalogue 1992:13), only three of the ten Caversham Press participating artists were female.

One problem that the organisers encountered was a lack of understanding of the boundaries between fine art and botanical art. Arnold maintains (*Art Meets Science* catalogue 1992:3):

...the division is constructed and artificial; it is a matter of the context in which the image is made, viewed and interpreted. Although botanical and fine artists produce works to suit the demands and opportunities of separate disciplines, ultimately they owe allegiance only to their own vision and creative sensibilities. Through a skilful



use of the formal visual vocabulary, they persuade the viewer to believe in a representation and to respond sensuously and cognitively ...

John Manning is a botanical artist whose usual working manner is seductively realistic. His lithograph, *Datura*, is rendered in the delicate nuances of texture and tone allowed by this printmaking process, which mimics a pencil sketch with subtle watercolour work. A screenprint challenged the same artist in terms of faithful reproduction. Manning found fineness of line more difficult to achieve with this technique, thus his print *Gloriosa Superba* is stylistically very different from his classical *Datura*. In addition, he created a background area composed of an irregular vivid jade green area with superimposed agitated brown marks. Although this creates a dynamic image with strong colour contrasts, it hovers uncomfortably between the botanical and fine art categories.

By contrast, Karel Nel's print, *Boat of the Oblivious Bloom*, depicts a cropped literal space. The monochrome characteristic of traditional stone lithography was unusual for Nel, who at that time was working with rich colour, but it enhances ambiguity in subject matter and content where flower parts fuse with boat symbolism. Derek Nxumalo's screenprint, *Manor Garden*, stylistically resembles his paintings; and the brightly coloured image of a simple pot of flowers in a domestic setting approximated his usual subject matter of celebrating the everyday.

Despite receiving some project funding for the venture from The Standard Bank National Festival of the Arts Committee,<sup>33</sup> this portfolio was not a commercial success for The Caversham Press in terms of print sales. Collectors of botanical art felt the price of the prints was too high compared with original drawings and watercolours. Botanical artists traditionally sell paintings and drawings at much lower prices than fine artists and their prints were being marketed at prices comparable to the fine artists' prints. Also, some of these collectors had little understanding of printmaking techniques, and, again, became confused as to the difference between original prints and reproductions.<sup>34</sup>

Collectors of fine art, used to art with stronger political content, found the subject matter too 'soft', not reading the underlying concept of the exhibition in the images produced. The Vita Art Now exhibition of the same year was comprised of cutting-edge work with harsh social messages. For the first time the exhibition showed traditional media and installation work, multi-media sculptures, video and computer generated imagery (*Vita Art Now 1992* catalogue:3). The annual award winner was William Kentridge, with drawings for his production *Woycek on the Highveld*,<sup>35</sup> and three animated films. The three merit award winners were from a new breed of conceptual artists, Alan Alborough and Marc Edwards, who made



installation-sculpture, and photographer Günther Herbst. Several other artists used 'found' and manipulated objects.

Christian included some botanical prints in his Print Collector range in 1993 and 1994. Most of the Print Collectors were interested in fine art, and membership dropped off, never to recover its former figures. In the years to follow, prints from this portfolio were purchased mainly by interior decorators, or businesses looking for 'original art' that would not offend staff and clients.

The next large project undertaken at The Caversham Press, *Spirit of our Stories: Images of African Narrative*, achieved more success in the art market. This suite of 54 works was shown at The Standard Bank National Festival of the Arts in Grahamstown in 1995.

When he began to hold Educational Trust workshops at The Caversham Press, Christian realised that work was initiated much faster if the artists were given a broad theme with which to work. Christian has had a long-standing interest in text and image, and decided to use narrative from Africa<sup>36</sup> as a loose concept. This project proved so satisfying for Christian that his interest in combining text and image was intensified.

One reason for the commercial success of this project was its time in the history of South Africa. 1995 was the year following South Africa's first democratic election, and the country was imbued with optimism for the future. Williamson states: "with regard to the new feelings of lightness, one must note the unifying effect that the charm and high moral character of Nelson Mandela have spread across the land" (1996:7). There was talk of an African Renaissance and the then-Anglican Archbishop Desmond Tutu had coined the phrase 'Rainbow Nation', to encompass the notion of diversity within unity, the promotion of tolerance and a desire for understanding of the diversity of cultures in South Africa.

Williamson (1996:7) maintains that the sense of *ubuntu* or that "a person is a person through other people", a Xhosa proverb that epitomises humanity and community, encouraged artists to become involved in creative projects which would empower a wider group of people. The concept of *Spirit of our Stories* fitted in with this ideal. Christian's invitation of informally trained people from the Dakawa Art Centre and Ardmore Ceramic Studio - two empowerment centres making crafts - and historically disadvantaged artists who participated under the umbrella of The Educational Trust, were given the opportunity to make fine art prints and to interact with more established artists working there at the same time.



The prints discussed from these participating groups demonstrate a variety of skills and approaches to work. Edith Bukani's *Strict Parents* describes a contemporary situation of a young girl planning suicide as her parents will not allow her to marry the man she loves. This underlined the conflict arising in many families between the traditional beliefs of the elders and the modern approach of the youngsters to issues such as marriage. The image is roughly drawn in the naïve manner instantly associated with informally trained artists; yet her use of scale, positions and poses of the figures is psychologically sophisticated.

Ardmore's participants were going to be provided with stories, but it was decided that they should create images relating to the ceramic work that they were making. These artists source imagery from a combination of dreams, life around them on the farm and from Halsted-Berning's library of reference books (*Spirit of our Stories* catalogue 1995). Wonderboy Nxumalo was a plate painter and chose to use a circular format. As with Ntshalintshali's *Jonah*, the Ardmore artists, untrained in drawing and unaware of formal representational devices such as framing or perspective, made free-floating images of irregular formats. Nxumalo's *scraffito* technique simulates linocut or wood engraving, print techniques that were associated with community workshops.

Sthembiso Sibisi had some formal drawing training at the African Arts Centre in Durban. A screenprint lithograph combination demonstrates Sibisi's competence as a draftsman enhancing his intuitive sense of composition and sensitive tonal range. *Precious Gift* is a traditional story of a woman whose good deeds are rewarded by prayer. Sibisi belongs to the Shembe religion, a traditional church that maintains Zulu culture.

Mmagabo Helen Sebidi's print, *Lebelo. Le A Jelwa*, was inspired by a traditional story, but also contains some reference to the dream imagery that is associated with her *genre*. The crowded, claustrophobic composition and vibrant palette reflects that of her oil paintings. Sebidi had been a well-established artist since the mid 1980s and was awarded the Standard Bank Young Artist Award in 1989, the first black artist to achieve this.

In 1995, the South African mainstream art market was supported predominantly by white patrons, and this portfolio of prints suited its needs. The images (and tales) of *Spirit of our Stories* provided a gentle insight into mainly black tradition and life, in a relatively non-threatening manner without overt political overtones, a refreshing change at the time from township and resistance arts. And the standard of print presentation was in keeping with that expected by the established art world.



In addition, 1995 was the year in which the watershed Gencor Art Collection was unveiled. The stated desire of the Gencor President, Brian Gilbertson, was “to develop an art collection that would reflect the transition of South African society, rather than one that would simply please” (Geers 1997:26) and in the main, this collection represents the types of art made between 1990 and 1994 in the country.<sup>37</sup>

The Gencor Collection provided a benchmark for future collecting by the South African corporate world. Elizabeth Rankin discusses three issues related to the motivations of a corporation in establishing a collection of art, be it contemporary or traditional. She notes, firstly, the enhancement of the working space, with a view to improving the physical environment for employees; secondly, the chosen artwork reflects to visitors and clients the image that the company wants to project,<sup>38</sup> and thirdly, the financial investment value<sup>39</sup> (Contemporary South African Art: The Gencor Collection, 1997:54).

An interesting aspect of this collection is that a low ceiling was placed on the acquisitions of individual works, which led the committee to consider prints as a significant portion of the collection. In addition, the committee used the print collection as an historical mirror, to explore the development of printmaking in South Africa from the time of the establishment of the facility at Rourke's Drift until 1995 (Geers 1997:15). This was the first time that contemporary South African prints had been used extensively and thematically in a corporate art collection.

The print collection of Gencor paved the way for another significant corporate collection: the MTN Collection. The newly established company MTN<sup>40</sup> was looking for art consultants to assist them in developing an art collection. They accepted a progressive proposal from the artist, printmaker and educator, Philippa Hobbs, in conjunction with accountant and business entrepreneur, Ronel Loukakis. This proposal suggested that the preliminary core of the collection should feature South African prints, both contemporary and historical, and that it would feature artists poorly represented in national or corporate collections.<sup>41</sup> It was an extension of the historical theme of the Gencor print collection.<sup>42</sup> Prints from *Spirits of our Stories* formed a portion of this collection in its early stages.

Although committees of art professionals had been used to establish the Gencor and MTN collections, the fact that so many of the selected artworks were currently-available edition prints meant that other corporations wanting to begin their own collections of contemporary South African art could replicate these collections in part.<sup>43</sup> Although this resulted in a mini-boom of print sales in the mid-1990s, unfortunately it had the effect of cementing an art elite:



for example, for every collection must have a Kentridge, Hodgins, Sebidi, etc., while other artists, whose work may have been both good quality technically and significant in concept, were consistently overlooked.<sup>44</sup> Geers himself concedes that the collection contains some “omissions and oversights” (1997:24).<sup>45</sup>

The mid-1990s saw a flurry of ‘art consultants’, with varying degrees of qualification, from fine art graduates to interior decorators and framers, advising companies on using artwork in the corporate environment (especially the reception lobby) to portray their commitment to the New South Africa. *Spirit of our Stories* provided a large selection of prints by a variety of artists. It may be argued that this suite of prints featured many images by unknown artists, which led to these prints being purchased and therefore becoming parts of significant collections. However, often a print was bought because it was by a black artist, that artist being seen as a generic for the whole group, and the specific image randomly selected by subjective preference, and on a basis of immediate availability. Unlike the works of established artists, repeat sales by the same collector/purchaser would rarely request more work by that specific artist.

1995 also saw the opening of the First Johannesburg Biennale, with the working titles, *Decolonising our Minds* and *Volatile Alliances*. The aim was to redress historical imbalances in represented South African artists, with a view, according to Christopher Till, to “moving the margins to the mainstream” (Preller 1998:31). However, a major criticism of this Biennale was that although intercultural work was exhibited, it was shown with a sense of being tolerated for purposes of political correctness rather than being embraced as equal legitimate creative expression (Preller 1998:4). Prominence of exhibiting space was given to South African artists working in an international mode, that is, Installation Art. In this way, the mainly young, white, male ‘cutting edge’ artists received attention, further entrenching a fine art elite.

Marilyn Martin discusses the postmodern mainstream pluralist toleration of art from rural or peripheral areas. However, she warns that the “curators and cultural-mongers have specific ideas of what the ‘periphery’ should deliver and what it should have for its own good” and that if the periphery does not “suit academics, curators, residual modernists and the art market ... selective pluralism is applied” (1997:136). The issue of pluralism was played out in many spheres of South African cultural activity. In amplification, Martin quotes Thomas McEvelley as saying that contemporary art “has more to do with clarifying cultural identity than with aesthetic feeling, ‘beauty’, or the transcendental” and that when “exported from within a culture to the outside world is a type of visual diplomacy” (1997:140).



By 1995, the Standard Bank National Festival of the Arts in Grahamstown was one of the most popular cultural events of the year, attracting people from both within and outside the art world. The launch of *Spirit of our Stories* at this venue, and the subsequent inclusion of the prints in art collections, could be viewed as an export from the little known world of community-based art projects<sup>46</sup> to the South African community at large.

The portfolio *Ubu Centenaire* became one of the first examples of marketable art that was exported from South Africa to the international art community, in particular, the USA. The work of many South African artists had been presented at international shows and Biennales, for example, Willem Boshoff, Kendall Geers and Karel Nel, although most of this work was non-commercial, taking the form of installation.

Since the early 1980s Robert Hodgins had used the concept of Ubu as subject for his paintings and prints. In 1996, Hodgins conceived the idea of celebrating the centenary of Alfred Jarry's play, *Ubu Roi*, by holding an exhibition with William Kentridge and Deborah Bell, a part of which would comprise the print portfolio. The collaboration and production of this print portfolio influenced Kentridge's 1997 stage production *Ubu and the Truth Commission*.<sup>47</sup>

Hodgins' eight prints depicted a century of Ubu in the role of participant – either passive, or as a figure of secondary importance - during dark periods of human history. *South Africa 197? – Interrogator* shows an unreceptive petty official with a closed dossier file on the desk in front of him. The sense of implicit threat is emphasised by the dark glasses and shadow covering the face, and the anonymity of the room's few furnishings – typical of a government office of the apartheid era. His body of prints has the impression of being a series of snapshots documenting selected incidents.

Bell explored the concept of Ma Ubu, the power behind the throne, and associated issues such as violence, greed and corruption. *Salutations* is dominated by the depiction of a handshake with the nearby text "greasing palms". She transforms African artefacts into figures of varying scale and tone, as well as other objects connected with power in Africa, such as the AK-47 machine gun, hand grenade and landmine. These figures and objects appear to float in different planes, as if on different levels of consciousness. Her group of prints, which contain seemingly randomly placed fragments of image, text and patches of colour, referring backwards and forwards between the individual images, functions as a cohesive whole.

Of the three artists, only Kentridge's suite of prints has a strong narrative aspect, functioning in a non-chronological sequence, and has its own sub-title *Ubu Tells the Truth*. The print



production had sparked off the idea for his stage production. The images show a naked man performing personal or intimate rituals – the wall behind him is a blackboard, containing crude drawings of Jarry's Ubu figure. *Act II Scene 1*, also known as *The Shower*, refers to an important visual element in *Ubu and the Truth Commission*, as the Ubu figure in the play repeatedly washes his body in a shower cubicle with a telephone-style shower rose, to remove the smell of blood and dynamite; this same cubicle serves throughout the production as the translator's cubicle during the reciting of testimonies (Taylor 1998:xii).

*Ubu Centenaire* was launched at the 1997 National Festival of the Arts in Grahamstown, followed by the group's exhibition of collaborative works, including three collaborative print portfolios at the Johannesburg Art Gallery. The latter coincided with and formed part of the proceedings of the 1997 Johannesburg Biennale.

A main feature of the 1997 Biennale was the dearth of works in the traditional media of painting, drawing and sculpture, accompanied by a proliferation of film and video installations and computer-generated images of largely inaccessible content (Preller 1998:42-43). Although *Ubu Centenaire* was conservative in terms of medium,<sup>48</sup> there were other aspects of the project to be considered.

In 1996, The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) began its work. The aim of the TRC was to encourage South Africans who had been either victims or perpetrators of abuse in the country during the 35 years leading up to the first democratic election a chance to tell their story.<sup>49</sup> The proceedings of The TRC were televised, slotted between commercial breaks and soap operas, and most South Africans were disturbed by the revelations, yet uncertain as to how they were to process the received information emotionally (Taylor 1998:v).

In the formerly politicized South African arena of art and theatre, a curious state of limbo had arisen, as with the first democratic election, the theme of resistance to an oppressor had been removed. The information provided by the TRC became a brief but rich source of matter for creative engagement.

Kentridge, during the period 1992 to 1996, had been exploring multi-dimensional theatre,<sup>50</sup> which combined acting, puppet work and back-drop projections of drawings and hand-drawn video. While working on the etchings for *Ubu Centenaire*,<sup>51</sup> he saw a way to combine the bizarre but brutal actions of the tragic-comic figure of Ubu with the sobering revelations of the TRC, using puppets as mediums to speak for the ordinary man giving testimony.<sup>52</sup> Kentridge, acting as director, coordinated the skills of a playwright, puppeteers from the Handspring



Puppet Company and two actors. In collaboration with Handspring, he designed the puppets and props and created drawings for backdrop projection.<sup>53</sup>

*Ubu and the Truth Commission* premiered at the Kunstfest Weimar in June 1997, and played throughout August that year at the Market Theatre, Newtown, Johannesburg. Although the production did not form an official part of the Second Johannesburg Biennale, the Biennale opened in September, with the memory of this production fresh in critics' minds. It formed the ultimate postmodern artwork, according to the then-mandate for installation/performance work, featuring several currently desirable trends. It was collaborative in nature, interdisciplinary, sophisticated both conceptually and technically, had a politically significant theme, functioned within a time-frame visually, and did not pander to the demands of the art market.

However, alongside this was the print portfolio, a tangible and therefore marketable version of the theatrical production. The three artists had produced collaborative portfolios before, and the usual marketing tactic was to keep a certain agreed number of portfolios as complete suites; then a certain number of the individual artists' sets as complete artists' suites; and finally, a certain percentage would be sold as individual works. Up to that point, the work of all three artists had been equally desirable in terms of sales, and usually, a suite of prints of this size and cost would move slowly initially.

Unfortunately, no one foresaw that Kentridge's theatrical production, in combination with his sudden rise to prominence in the international art arena, would lead to an overwhelming demand for his prints. As well as being marketed by The Caversham Press,<sup>54</sup> Kentridge's local agent, the Goodman Gallery, requested a large batch of print sets; as did David Krut, who had helped to establish Kentridge internationally; and the artist needed to retain several sets of prints for his own forthcoming international exhibitions.

This launch had coincided with Christian's six-week trip to the UK. The editioning had not been completed, as Christian, expecting a typical reaction, had printed the first 10 portfolios only. He and the artists had not had the opportunity to discuss ratios. On his return, he discovered that almost all of Kentridge's prints had been committed for purchase, and none of the prints of the other two artists. This led to enormous disappointment among many of The Press' regular clients. Christian was in the unenviable position of being pressurized into printing and delivering Kentridge's complete batch of prints to a tight deadline; and having to inform Bell and Hodgins that there were only a limited number of complete suites available.



The demand for Kentridge's prints in South Africa came from the corporate market; but also from The Press' core of clients, who had supported The Press since the publication of the *Decade of Young Artists* portfolio, and who would regularly contact The Press's agent to see new publications. Some of The Press's clients were professionals with young families, who had made the decision to emigrate. Some had already emigrated and, on visits back, wished to buy artwork. Others had businesses and spent several months traveling abroad. The appeal of Kentridge's prints was in part due to a wish to invest in artwork that would have international value. When the small supply of prints from the *Ubu Tells the Truth* series was exhausted, purchasers demanded any prints by Kentridge that were available.<sup>55</sup>

Reasons for emigration were economic and social. During 1997, three years after the first democratic election, the widespread sense of euphoria in South Africa dissipated, as the reality of the state of the nation began to make itself more visible. The impact of the government's neglect of formally addressing the HIV/AIDS epidemic meant that by 1996, official figures of the infected had grown to 756 237 from just 36 240 in 1990.<sup>56</sup> Government health facilities showed signs of deterioration due to poor management. Educational policies were perceived as being ill-advised, as the need to redress educational inequalities led to the proposal of the controversial outcomes-based education system, along with the retrenchment of older experienced teachers. But one of the most significant reasons for emigration was the increase of violent crime, such as armed robbery, carjackings, rape and, often, random murder at the scenes of such crimes. The opening up of South Africa's borders also led to an influx of unskilled migrants, and an increase in the drug market and prostitution.

One theme of the 1995 Biennale was the issue of marginalisation caused by colonialism, and the promotion of ideals of pluralism. The 1997 Biennale was concerned chiefly with globalisation and creating entry into the international art world. Hazel Friedman said: "trade is occurring along a prescribed thematic route paved by a particular discourse favoured by a core group of artists" (Preller 1998:41), while David Koloane maintained: "it is not the [formerly] suppressed communities who are heralding the new era, but those who were the beneficiaries of apartheid" (Preller 1998:42). Thus marginalisation was recurring, not as a result of colonialism or forced adoption of foreign principles, but due to adherence to elitist viewpoints by both the curators of the Biennale and a clique of South African artists, wishing to be accepted and acknowledged by the international art world. Marginalisation occurred in the art market as purchasers did not want to take risks with their money, preferring a safe bet in the form of work by an internationally acclaimed artist.



This experience with the art market caused Christian to reconsider his situation. He decided to function as much as possible without financial considerations, and began an intensive period of fund-raising to establish The Caversham Centre. On receiving adequate sponsorship,<sup>57</sup> Christian was in a position to conceive a project with invited artists without having to consider the swings and demands of the art market. The result was *The Hourglass Project*, an experiment in the spirit of international exchange through creative work.

The idea for this project came about as an extension of the book project *Chainstitch*, shown at the 1997 Standard Bank National Festival of the Arts in Grahamstown.<sup>58</sup> Due to contacts made while visiting the U.K. and Ireland, and an introduction to printmaker Lynne Allen from Rutgers University, Christian formed a network to invite applications to participate in *The Hourglass Project*.

Up to 1998, the year that *The Hourglass Project* was in its planning stages, post-democratic South Africa had received enormous media coverage, and was upheld internationally as an example of a formerly divided nation that had achieved successful and peaceful transfer of political power. With the lifting of the cultural boycott in the early 1990s, many international artists wished to visit South Africa, in part to interact with its artists at all levels, and to assist in a skills transference to historically underprivileged artists and craftspeople.

In 1998, Sheila Flynn<sup>59</sup> began to work with Christian, under the auspices of The Caversham Press Educational Trust. She aided his fundraising efforts, and established an empowerment project at Mpophomeni near the Caversham district. She taught the local women papermaking and helped them develop their existing embroidery and beading abilities, bringing groups to The Caversham Press for more specialised courses in printmaking and bookbinding. In addition, she began to develop business skills and a level of self-organisation within the group. The prospective international participants of *The Hourglass Project* were offered the opportunity to work with this group.

Christian considered numerous submissions of slides and artists' statements, and finally selected 15 women artists. The artists were invited as groups to ensure an even exchange of ideas between overseas and local artists, between the more experienced and less established artists, and, wherever possible, with crossover between groups.<sup>60</sup> With the brief of *Icons for the Millenium*, the artists worked with the themes of the passage of time and methods for the gathering and preservation of social and personal memories to take forward into the future.



The interaction was more successful than Christian had anticipated. The ethos at The Caversham Press is particularly conducive, not only to concentrated work, but to constructive dialogue. In addition, the theme allowed each artist to concentrate on her own creative concerns yet to identify with each other on personal and professional levels. The suite of prints reflects the result of an intense engagement on the part of the artists with their images, as well as the focussed practical input from Christian, which encouraged the artists to push the technical boundaries of their previous experiences in printmaking.

American artist, educator and printmaker, Lynne Allen experimented with a sophisticated combination of printmaking techniques to produce *My Winter Count*. Allen is a descendent on her maternal side of a Sioux Indian and chose to use five shoes as a metaphor for five matriarchal generations of her family. The two depicted figures (herself and her ancestor) are covered with pattern – one of images and text relating to her ancestor and one of commercial cowboy and Indian wallpaper that she remembers from her childhood home. In her personal image for preservation of memory, Allen engages with issues such as pluralist tolerance, embracing the acceptance and honouring of another culture, and an essentially female use of pattern and clothing as symbol (*The Hourglass Project* catalogue 1999:11).

Sheila Flynn, one of the participants of *Chainstitch*, was at the time helping Christian to establish an outreach arm of The Caversham Press Educational Trust in the KwaZulu-Natal Midlands. As a Catholic nun, her work among women living with HIV/AIDS consisted of empowerment by the transference of income-generating crafts-related skills. This work, and the presence of the gravestones of women from the 1800s in the Caversham garden inspired her to create a visual tombstone in their honour. A recurring theme in her own artwork is the fertility doll, which is her symbol of hope for life and the future. This visually dense print contains images of fertility dolls, and a quaint Victorian-style cut-out doll, which she remembers from her own childhood. The layering process inherent in screenprint functions for Flynn, an artist printmaker, as a metaphor for the layering process of life's experiences, "how nothing is lost" (*The Hourglass Project* catalogue 1999:23).

Patricia Hurl, from Dublin Ireland, was one of the few women to confront self-portraiture directly, albeit in a scientific manner, exploring genetic links. The artist, born as a late baby, lost her mother to cancer while in her fifties. On reaching that age herself, and having a cancer scare, she distracted herself by painting her own body, recognising remembered traces of her mother's body in her own physical being. This print depicts the artist's naked body in an unselfconscious casual pose, overprinted with small personal imagery. Trails and tracks criss-crossing the body refer to the Mitochondria (Eve) Factor in living DNA. Hurl said: "I



sometimes felt, when drawing, I was looking down a tunnel of generations” (*The Hourglass Project* catalogue 1999:27).

All three artists incorporated text written in their own handwriting, alluding to autobiography and personal experience, as integral parts of their images. Allen used text, her ancestor’s writings, to create a visually interesting area of background. Flynn, after the image was complete, wrote a poem about the “ingathering of women” (*The Hourglass Project* catalogue 1999:23) as a hymn of praise, and overprinted it onto her image as a superimposition of that last life experience. Hurl uses patches of text placed in such a manner that visually, the words create formal areas of tone on the body.

This suite of highly sophisticated large-scale prints was not marketed actively at the time of publication. The parameters of the art market had shifted since the 1995 commercial success of *Spirit of our Stories*. Many of the corporations that had rushed to purchase artworks were no longer doing so. Some businesses had collected art as an interior decorating policy, or a public relations exercise, rather than as a desire to establish a formal art collection, and their office walls held a full quota of images. Also, in part, an economic downsizing had led to retrenchments and a highly unionised staff, who were more concerned with maintaining jobs than spending money on artwork. In addition, the steady international translocation of young professionals, traditionally the private collectors of the future, had impacted on individual purchasing.

Prints from *The Hourglass Project* had other marketing features to be considered. As was seen at the time of the release of *Ubu Centenaire*, collectors looked increasingly for a sense of perceived financial security when purchasing artwork.<sup>61</sup> The spread of artists was uneven in terms of market desirability. Of the nine artists from Southern Africa, only Bell’s work was instantly sought after. The six international artists were unknown in South Africa, and would prove difficult to sell. The prints were also relatively expensive, as Christian had to consider the usual selling price of the work of the participating international artists.<sup>62</sup> Finally, the prints were large-scale, and potential clients sometimes considered the cost of conservation framing before purchasing an artwork on paper.

There was an immediate demand by the local art market for Bell’s print, as she was achieving acclaim in South Africa. However, after the experience of the *Ubu Centenaire* portfolio, Christian decided not to release the prints, except to a few carefully selected collectors.<sup>63</sup> As the project had been sponsored, the production costs had been covered and thus there was no financial urgency to recoup funds.



Due to the funding, the travelling costs, living expenses and materials of all the participants had been subsidised. As the artists had come from different continents and centres, Christian decided that the project should function outside the co-operative system of The Caversham Press. As a result, each artist had received a number of her own prints in payment for her participation, thus ending her immediate link to the dialogue programme. The balance of the portfolios thus remained as the property of The Caversham Press.

This suite of 15 prints formed the first exhibition of the Millennium in the Lowe Gallery in Atlanta, Georgia, USA and was exhibited for the first time in South Africa at the 2000 Standard Bank National Festival of the Arts in Grahamstown. During the American exhibition, Christian was offered future opportunities to exhibit in the USA.

A number of issues emerge from this survey of the Caversham portfolios and the art market. 1985-2000 saw profound changes occurring in the South African art world, which paralleled changes in the country's socio-economic state, in turn influencing the art market. Curating policies are products of their time. These six printmaking projects from The Caversham Press can be described as products of their time. In each instance, the choice and work of the artists participating in these projects, and the motivating factors behind the concept of the portfolios mirrored prevailing trends. Social and economic concerns were reflected by the manner in which the prints were released into the Johannesburg art market, and their subsequent acceptance or rejection by possible purchasers.

In 1985, *The Centenary Portfolio* was intended as a showcase for art in Johannesburg. The five established artists, working within their known *genres*, reflected the current male-bias of that period. As the commission was on a sponsored contract basis, the portfolio was not well-promoted, and as a result, entered few collections. Also, at this time, there was little interest in the mainstream market for prints by South African artists. Six years later, the thematic concerns and academic interests of the Standard Bank Young Artist of the Year award-winners had covered a spectrum of early postmodern issues such as feminism, socio-political observation, use of personal symbol, appropriation and transformation and the notion of collaboration in works. The prints of *Decade of Young Artists* not only demonstrated these issues, but the prints related closely to the work of these acclaimed artists. Furthermore, by 1991, The Caversham Press had made its mark on the South African art world, and created a demand for fine art prints by contemporary local artists. The *Decade of Young Artists* portfolio was the first project in which The Caversham Press functioned as a co-operative utilising a marketing agent. As a result of both these factors, the portfolio sold out quickly.



The 1992 *Art Meets Science* project had a sound conceptual base, rooted in issues engaging artists internationally, and the participating fine artists and botanical artists were well known in their separate spheres. However, the market did not respond positively to the portfolio, as its instant perception of the suite was one of light content - 'flower pictures' - at a time of political upheaval and apprehension for the country's future. Conversely, *Spirit of our Stories*, produced one year after the pivotal 1994 democratic elections, featured works by largely unknown artists. However, the subject matter of gently didactic narrative images of traditional African life resonated with the widespread attitude of inclusive tolerance for different cultures. The release of the portfolio coincided with a rush of corporations buying artworks to establish collections of contemporary South African art, in part to associate themselves with positive changes in the country.

The themes used by the three established artists in 1996-7 for their *Ubu Centenaire* portfolio was topical, and the images reflected the unease beginning to be felt socially. The sudden demand for the prints of internationally-acclaimed William Kentridge demonstrated a new desire for investment value in the purchase of South African artwork accompanied by the wish to acquire work by a 'status-symbol' artist. In 1999, the 15 women artists of *The Hourglass Project* were using deeply personal metaphors to create their images, and the three artists whose work was discussed employed hand-written text as a significant part of their images. Of the 15, only a few were well known in the Johannesburg art market. However, although the exhibited project traveled widely throughout South Africa, it was not actively marketed as the prints were being held back to exhibit in the USA. For the first time, The Caversham Press had produced a suite of prints almost exclusively for the international market.

The good reception of *The Hourglass Project* exhibition in the USA and the sustained active support of key members of the sponsoring bodies enabled Christian to obtain further funding, which will continue in its present form until the end of 2003. In addition, since 1998 Christian has attended an annual congress in the USA that is focused on funding for the arts. The network he has built up as a result of these contacts has enabled him to continue functioning as a sponsored establishment, with himself as Director. He has worked on two further themed projects since 2000, releasing only a limited number of these prints into the local market. Glenda Andrew, acting as agent for The Caversham Press, has access to mainly older prints to supply the established Caversham customers and has extended the client base built up by Julia Meintjies and myself.



Between 2000 and 2002, there have been marked changes in the Johannesburg-based professional printmaking arena. At the end of 2002, Mark Attwood of The Artists' Press is relocating his lithographic studio to White River, four hours north-east of Johannesburg. He has always been inspired by the peaceful ethos of The Caversham Press, which has played a part in this decision. In addition, his wife, Tamar Mason, is actively involved with a rural women's self-empowerment group in that area, and the couple wish their young children to grow up in a less sophisticated area. However, Attwood, acknowledging the realities of work and family commitments among the artists who support him, is keeping a skeleton operation functioning at his current premises in Newtown. For a week each month, he plans to work in his Newtown studio on plate origination with artists, then take the plates back to his White River studio for editioning, hoping that artists will spend some time at the White River studio for concentrated work. Attwood will maintain his own client base for prints produced at the studio, the artists also sell their own work and some of his work is contact printing for art publishers.

The Artist Proof Studio continues to receive sponsorship for printmaking study for young black artists. However, as well as monitoring the creative bursaries, from 2001, the Board of Trustees requested that the management encourage employment skills and promote a firmer work ethic among the graduates. This led to a reassessment of the work programs which run alongside the teaching of printmaking. One such program has been the undertaking of contract printing for professional artists and art publishers in relief, intaglio and plate lithography.<sup>64</sup>

Artist Proof Studio has joined forces with the outreach arm of the Fine Arts Department of Technikon Witwatersrand, collaborating with three of their facilities. Artist Proof Studio has set up a papermaking section, after three of its graduates received training from the Technikon's papermaking outreach department. In 2001, the Technikon established a small commercial screenprinting unit, managed by lecturer David Paton.<sup>65</sup> This unit offered training in screenprint and casual work opportunities to five Artist Proof Studio graduates. They also set up a small unit at Artist Proof Studio, and print T-shirts there on commission. Artist Proof Studio serves as a base for an embroidery empowerment group, based in the Winterveld, to showcase their work. The active members of these three groups regularly collaborate in AIDS Awareness projects. Products from all three of these enterprises are taken regularly to craft markets. In addition, the studio has its own exhibiting space for prints and craft products, which are purchased by a range of clients, from regularly visiting art consultants to overseas tourists.

An exciting development in 2002 has been the establishment of a new professional printmaking studio in Johannesburg by art publisher David Krut. Called David Krut Workshop, or DKW, and situated close to the Goodman Gallery, the new press was designed in collaboration with



New York-based printmaker Randy Hemminghaus<sup>66</sup> and offers facilities for the printmaking techniques of intaglio, relief and monotype/monoprint.<sup>67</sup>

When Krut produced a commissioned edition of prints in the past, he would pay the artists' costs to visit printmaking studios in the USA and the UK.<sup>68</sup> However, the diminishing value of the Rand has forced him to consider local printing and consequently the establishment of his own studio.<sup>69</sup> Although he uses Attwood for lithography projects, Krut felt that in Johannesburg there was a lack of a focused professional studio for commercially viable contract printing in other techniques.

He intends to bring a selection of international printmakers to his studio to supervise specific projects and to improve his infrastructure. In addition, Krut has developed a professional association with Jo Ractliffe of the University of the Witwatersrand, and his project with Hemminghaus in 2002 created fresh interest among her Fine Art students in traditional printmaking as an expressive medium.<sup>70</sup> Krut hopes to provide workshops in different techniques, by visiting printmakers, to Ractliffe's students, thereby attempting to stimulate more interest in printmaking among aspiring new artists, which should ultimately benefit the art market by creating more demand for prints.

The demand for prints by the Johannesburg art market has also been encouraged by the establishment in 2001 of Art on Paper, a fine art gallery dedicated to works on paper. The director, Alet Vorster, a paper conservator, hosts exhibitions featuring a variety of artworks on paper, from drawings to fine art books to installation work. Prints form a large ratio of the exhibiting works. In addition, Vorster keeps editioned prints on consignment in her gallery from The Caversham Press, The Artists' Press, Artist Proof Studio, published works from David Krut and works from selected artist/printmakers nationwide. As well as promoting an interest in prints among her growing network of clients, Vorster offers advice on the care of works on paper. This gallery has proved to be a popular venue and Vorster now has extra space connected to her gallery, allowing for three separate exhibitions to run concurrently.

Looking back on fifteen years of printmaking activity it is obvious that the complexity of the interaction between the many facets associated with the South African art world has led to an exciting, varied and creative period. In their artwork, South African artists have explored universal issues, some of which have absorbed artists internationally, yet without neglecting their own place in history, politically and geographically. Over this time-span, printmaking formed part of the creative vocabulary of artists of all levels, age groups, racial groups and both



genders. Throughout, prints from The Caversham Press have set a high standard for this artform in South Africa.

However, in 2000, the picture for printmaking and the art market appeared bleak. The market was tightening, some top artists began making work for the international market and The Caversham Press seemed to become a facility lost to most South African artists.

Notwithstanding these issues, from 2000 to the present there has been evidence of new printmaking energy in Johannesburg. This is due in part to the refocusing of the functioning structures of the existing professional presses, the development of a new press alongside its director's desire to make his facility available to young artists and the establishment of a new gallery, committed to artworks on paper, including prints. Contemporary South African printmaking has proved to be an adaptable artform, its products and the operating practices of its proponents reflecting the current socio-economic status of the country.

---

#### ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Hereafter referred to as *Johannesburg Art and Artists*.

<sup>2</sup> Statement from the Johannesburg Art Gallery to provide a context for viewing the 1988 Vita Art Now Exhibition (*Vita Art Now 1988 Catalogue*). This exhibition represents work exhibited the year previously.

<sup>3</sup> Cattaneo studied at Scuola d'Arte del Castello, Milan from 1947 to 1952; and at Accademia Brera, Milan from 1952-53 (Berman 1983:88). Hodgins studied at Goldsmith College, London University from 1947 to 1953 (Hodgins & Powell 1996).

<sup>4</sup> Legae studied at the Polly Street Art Centre from 1959 to 1960; and at the Jubilee Art Centre from 1960 to 1964 (De Jager 1992:114).

<sup>5</sup> Cattaneo lectured there between 1962 and 1971; and then again from 1974 until the mid-1980's. Hodgins lectured at the School of Art, Pretoria Technical College, in 1954; and then at the University of the Witwatersrand between 1966 and 1983 (Hodgins & Powell 1996).

<sup>6</sup> Legae taught at the Jubilee Centre from 1965 to 1969, also working part-time at FUBA during that period; and held the directorship from 1972 to 1974 (De Jager 1992:114).

<sup>7</sup> Full details of the prints mentioned in this chapter are listed in Appendix I.



<sup>8</sup> The 1985 exhibition *Tributaries: a View of Contemporary South African Art*, was sponsored by BMW (South Africa), and curated by Ricky Burnett. The exhibition showed fine art and traditional artefacts made by formally educated and informally trained artists, from all race groups in South Africa (Arnold 1996:160).

<sup>9</sup> According to Berman (1993:274), Cattaneo adopted the tree symbol after seeing a cypress growing in the *veld* of the Transvaal, considering it as an emblem of “an intruder struggling to survive” on foreign soil. Cattaneo describes walls as “witnesses to the life that passes by”; (Berman 1993:274) and his artist’s statement in the catalogue to *Johannesburg Art and Artists: A Selection From a Century* (1996:83) says that one of his “basic design elements” is “an architectural space that has windows or spaces...that can express my concerns and feelings at that particular time...”.

<sup>10</sup> Legae originally used empty neutral backgrounds to his bird images. However, he began to incorporate the image of the cocoon into patches of the background, as a symbol of metamorphosis (Berman 1983:256).

<sup>11</sup> This information was obtained from a ‘hand-out’ accompanying the exhibition catalogue.

<sup>12</sup> Legae trained and worked at Polly Street Art Centre, and at the Jubilee Art Centre; in addition, he formed part of the second wave of the Amadlozi Group of artists.

<sup>13</sup> Cattaneo formed part of the first Amadlozi Group of artists (see endnotes 16 and 18); and had been Guest Artist at The Johannesburg Art Gallery in 1982.

<sup>14</sup> Vels’ qualifications were obtained in South Africa; she lectured part-time at Technikon Witwatersrand from 1972-1984; set up a private teaching studio; and exhibited locally and internationally from 1977-1985 (*Johannesburg Art and Artists* catalogue 1986:90).

<sup>15</sup> By The Brenthurst Press, The Friends of The Johannesburg Art Gallery and Southern Life.

<sup>16</sup> I purchased a portfolio after being contacted by the then curator of the Print Collection at The Johannesburg Art Gallery. It appeared that only about 20 portfolios had been purchased at the time of publication.

<sup>17</sup> The price at the time of publication was R2 200.00 for the complete portfolio (circular to The Friends of The Johannesburg Art Gallery, 1986).

<sup>18</sup> There were no facilities available for the professional production of editions of prints by artists in South Africa at the time that The Caversham Press opened in 1985. There was a market for prints by international artists, which were available at some South African galleries, such as the Goodman Gallery and the Les Sacks Gallery.

<sup>19</sup> A German-born but Johannesburg-based art dealer, collector and promoter. He was a jeweller by profession, who ran a private gallery from his work premises until 1965, and then from his private residence. He formed the Amadlozi Group in 1963, consisting of artists Guiseppe Cattaneo, Sydney Khumalo, Cecily Sash, Cecil Skotnes and Edoardo Villa, who had all separately exhibited with him (*Johannesburg Art and Artists* Catalogue 1986:49). In 1970, for two years, in association with German printer Gert Mathies, he ran the Amadlozi Press, also from his residence (Berman 1983:33).

<sup>20</sup> Johannesburg master-printer, specialist in lithography. He is the father of lithographer Mark Attwood, director of The Artists’ Press.



<sup>21</sup> Guenther's group of artists, who, despite their disparate backgrounds and styles, reflected his personal ideal of "Africanism" in their work. When this group disbanded, he formed another group, one of whose members was Ezrom Legae (Berman 1983:32).

<sup>22</sup> As discussed in Chapter Two.

<sup>23</sup> Arnold acted as art critic for *The Herald* (Harare) and *The Pretoria News*. Her publications included *Zimbabwe Stone Sculpture* in 1981 (UNISA Art Lecturers catalogue 1986).

<sup>24</sup> Hereafter referred to as SAAAH.

<sup>25</sup> The thesis for her 1983 D.Litt et Phil. (UNISA) was about the work of Roger Fry and Virginia Woolf and early 20<sup>th</sup> century art and literature (*Red data AND etc.* catalogue 1998). Her work was included in the ground-breaking *Tributaries* exhibition (1985), the *Woman Artists in South Africa* exhibition (1985) and the 1985 Cape Triennial (UNISA Art Lecturers catalogue 1986). She presented a paper in 1990 at the 1<sup>st</sup> Conference of the SAAAH (Transvaal Branch), a conference entitled *Women and the Visual Arts*.

<sup>26</sup> Some top artists of the time, who did not necessarily make protest art as a regular part of their *genres*, contributed works that were "moulded" by the text of the book to fit the form of Resistance Art. Did the inclusion of these artists give added weight to the book? Or did these artists deem some "protest" to be essential for their professional standing?

<sup>27</sup> Frances Verstraete says: "All works of art classified as Township Art have specific iconographic content: daily life in the township, its people, their activities and the township landscape... Township Art is, therefore, politicised by choice of subject alone, even if the aims of the artists involved were not specifically political." (Nettleton & Hammond-Tooke 1989:153).

<sup>28</sup> This exhibition was an attempt to acknowledge and position the work of black artists from 1930 until the present. The catalogue essays addressed such issues as educational influences, social changes and patronage. Sack maintains the exhibition should serve as a "catalyst" for further in-depth research (*The Neglected Tradition* catalogue:7).

<sup>29</sup> Lize van Robbroeck maintains that Younge's book contains "academically unfounded generalisations and popular rhetoric"; and that Nettleton and Hammond-Tooke's publication contains essays that vary dramatically in academic quality, which avoid confronting sensitive issues and often contradict each other (1990: 37-41).

<sup>30</sup> The 1990s was a period during which many community-based groups were established, to aid rural women towards financial and, thereby hopefully, some social empowerment. In the main, these were set up by white women, who have had formal art training, and whose aim was to transfer skills to the group members. The better groups succeeded by taking cognisance of market demands for specific products and by building in a system of self-management. Often, there tends to be confusion regarding the 'creative' nature of these projects: although the products are craft-orientated, the manufacturers often look on the enterprise as a means of earning a living rather than a means of self-expression.

<sup>31</sup> Mandela had been released from jail and the ban lifted from the ANC in 1990. By 1992, there was political upheaval and an increase in violence as parties vied for support in the upcoming general election, for example, at Boipatong, near Vanderbijlpark, in the June of 1992, almost 50 ANC supporters were murdered by residents of an IFP hostel.

<sup>32</sup> See Appendix I for details of the participants.



<sup>33</sup> When an individual or institute was invited to participate in a National Festival of the Arts, the Standard Bank funded part of the venture, all or part of the following: it sponsored materials needed to produce the artworks, any framing materials required, transportation of the artworks and the travelling and accommodation costs of the individuals responsible for the exhibition. The Bank also covered any costs for the exhibition to travel to other centres. The *Art Meets Science* portfolio travelled to Port Elizabeth, Johannesburg, Cape Town, Pietermaritzburg and Durban.

<sup>34</sup> One such would-be purchaser confided in me that she just liked the image of the flower in question, and, once it was framed and on her wall, wasn't concerned about whether it was a painting, an original print or a photomechanical reproduction.

<sup>35</sup> *Woycek on the Highveld* was the first collaborative interdisciplinary production of William Kentridge, staged at the Market Theatre in 1992. It was an adaptation of the play *Woycek*, and performed by the Handspring Puppet Company. The puppets and props had been designed by Kentridge and Basil Jones and Adrian Kohler of Handspring; the backdrop was a projection of drawings by Kentridge. The music was composed by Phillip Miller.

<sup>36</sup> Africa has a strong oral tradition of story-telling, often from generation to generation, sometimes with moral overtones or subtle instruction regarding correct behaviour. Some of the stories used for this project were traditional and some modern. Many stories are descriptive and thus a rich source for visual interpretation (*Spirit of our Stories* catalogue 1995). However, although at the initial exhibition, the transcribed stories were presented next to the prints, the images often depict mere fragments of the tales and therefore can function as separate entities, and in some cases, the story provided just a starting point for the artist, so the link between text and image is not immediately apparent.

<sup>37</sup> An art committee, headed by the controversial Kendall Geers, was established to source the artwork. In addition, artists were asked to submit proposals for work to inhabit specific spaces in the Gencor building. Geers' idea was to promote corporate sponsorship for contemporary art and stated: "Collecting contemporary art is an investment in the present where living artists can benefit directly from the sale of their work and thus be encouraged to continue producing. A single sale will never make a financial difference in the life of an artist, but the moral support that such a sale accords can keep the same person working for months without expecting another." (Geers 1997:17).

The initial committee members were Geers; Lesley Spiro, acting director of the Johannesburg Art Gallery and curator of Contemporary Collection; Renasché Gilbertson, wife of Brian Gilbertson; Trevor Julius, interior designer for most of the building; Des Dussing, Gencor's project manager for the building; and the building's architect Mark Pencharz, whose original concept for his design was to house an art collection (Spiro 1997: 31).

<sup>38</sup> Rankin amplifies this by stating that a well-considered art collection suggests the success of the company, in that it can afford such an expense; that the managers have cultural awareness; and the particular works chosen reflect the values of the company, for example, a collection of contemporary art will show that the company is progressive (1997:54).

<sup>39</sup> Rankin maintains that investment is of secondary importance, as most companies do not sell their art collections (1997:54).

<sup>40</sup> MTN was one of the first service providers for the then-fledgling mobile phone industry in South Africa.

<sup>41</sup> The print collection was divided into three sections: pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial,



and although it included established artists, its primary aim was to redress policies that marginalized black printmakers (Atkinson, *de Arte*, 1998:43). In addition, this collection was to function as an educational facility for students and the public to attend organised tours. Hobbs has used the collection to motivate the changing of the school History of Art syllabus to include a section on South African printmaking. The stated motivation behind the MTN Collection was that of social investment.

<sup>42</sup> Hobbs, making use of her own extensive network within the South African printmaking fraternity, and Loukakis spent months travelling the country, sourcing prints for this collection. This time and experience culminated in the publishing of her book, written jointly with Elizabeth Rankin of the University of the Witwatersrand, *Printmaking in a Transforming South Africa* in 1997.

<sup>43</sup> Hobbs concedes that “as head offices multiply in the new South Africa and collections are required almost overnight, original prints are proving their worth as affordable works of art in the ‘bulk buying’ process”(1998:38).

<sup>44</sup> This filtered down to gallery level: in the late 1990s, due mainly to a downswing in the economy, some smaller galleries, who would exhibit the works of lesser known artists, closed down. These artists subsequently found difficulty in showing their work. Marginalisation continued in the art world in a different form. Whereas artists from historically disadvantaged backgrounds in the past had difficulty in having their work represented, so increasingly did white artists who were formally trained but outside the art elite.

<sup>45</sup> This was due to two factors: firstly, as the committee had a relatively short acquisition period in which to establish a complete art collection, there were limitations on their time as to how many artists could be visited (resulting in a good representation of works by people known to the committee); and they were partially dependent on availability of work. Secondly, as the collection was to represent only the period of transition from 1990 to 1994, and due to the unbundling of the corporation a few years later, the collection has not been expanded.

<sup>46</sup> According to Van Robbroeck (1992:49-57), community arts internationally usually took the form of rebellion against the state arts (formal education, museums) and “high art” (the art elite, mainstream galleries, etc.) with a stated desire to “take art into the streets and give it back to the people”. Community organisations served the needs of materially, educationally or culturally deprived people. Community arts in South Africa, prior to democratisation, in addition, used art as a means to express political dissatisfaction and effect social change. Post-democratisation, however, community arts often signified an attempt at financial self-empowerment.

<sup>47</sup> Details of this stage production are described later in Chapter Three.

<sup>48</sup> The traditional printmaking techniques of etching, drypoint, chin collé and screenprint were used in a documented edition.

<sup>49</sup> Jane Taylor (1998:ii) states that the purposes of the TRC were to create a sense of national reconciliation by retrieving lost histories, to make reparation for injustices and to provide amnesty for acts of abuse considered to be political in nature. She maintains that this was an important shift in thinking, as during the resistance era, personal stories of suffering were subsumed in favour of the larger goal of mass liberation.

<sup>50</sup> Kentridge’s training includes a preliminary BA in Politics and African Studies; 2 years of fine art studies at the Johannesburg Art Foundation; and 2 years studying mime and theatre at Ecole Jacques Lecoq, Paris.



---

<sup>51</sup> His director's note in the Taylor (1998) publication describes the development of concept and process during the production of *Ubu and the Truth Commission*.

<sup>52</sup> Kentridge, Hodgins and Bell frequently acknowledge that their working on collaborative projects has sparked off individual alternative creative ideas.

<sup>53</sup> The playwright was Jane Taylor, the puppeteers Basil Jones and Adrian Kohler of the Handspring Puppet Company, and actors Dawid Minaar and Busi Zokufa.

<sup>54</sup> In fact, as The Caversham Press's agent, I finally had access to only 5 portfolios out of 50 to sell.

<sup>55</sup> During this period, a "gold-rush" mentality seemed to strike. The first question that a regular Caversham client would ask on phoning me was "Do you have any Kentridge's?" If the answer was no, often the client would not bother to make an appointment. If the answer was yes, they may come and buy work by another artist, but one needed a Kentridge to persuade them through the door.

<sup>56</sup> Figures from *South Africa Survey 1996/97* quoted in Davenport and Saunders 2000.

<sup>57</sup> The Hourglass Project was possible because of the support of: John Samuel and the W.K. Kellogg Foundation; Harriet Sanford and the Fulton County Arts Council, Atlanta, Georgia, USA; Artists In Residence International (AIRI) Atlanta, Georgia, USA; Royal Netherlands Embassy, South Africa; and the Trustees of The Caversham Press Educational Trust.

<sup>58</sup> This book was the result of an interaction between three Johannesburg-based women artists and eight craftswomen from a rural self-empowerment group, celebrating song, work and cultural identity. The artists were Sheila Flynn, Monique Rudman and myself. The craftswomen were from the Mapula Embroidery Group, established by Flynn. Flynn conceived and co-ordinated the project.

<sup>59</sup> At that point, Flynn, an artist-printmaker, had spent several years researching papermaking, and assisted in setting up the papermaking facility at Technikon Witwatersrand. She had also set up self-help groups of papermakers and embroiderers in the Winterveld, under the umbrella of Technikon Witwatersrand's Outreach Program.

<sup>60</sup> Christian attempted to invite a range of local artists, working with a variety of themes and having disparate life experiences.

<sup>61</sup> This was always a problematic issue, and I as agent always attempted to impress upon the client that there were no guarantees for recouping a profit or even the purchase price in the reselling of an artwork.

<sup>62</sup> It is bad marketing policy to have the same prints for sale at different prices in different places. The artists would be free to sell their portion of prints on their return home. The South African artists were requested not to sell their prints for less than The Caversham Press's retail price.

<sup>63</sup> One of the first South African purchasers of this suite for their collection was MTN, who bought 12 of the 15 prints.



---

<sup>64</sup> This service does provide some employment and some income for the studio. However, as the teaching requirements of bursaried students takes precedence over other programs, the contract printing arm is not as professionally-orientated as that of by the other presses.

<sup>65</sup> Although Paton is a senior lecturer in drawing, he is also a printmaker. He loaned his personal printing equipment to the Technikon to set up 'Spark!', the outreach screenprint unit, so named as its premises are situated in the former Electricity Department in Orange Grove, Johannesburg. The space also contains a small exhibiting gallery.

<sup>66</sup> Hemminghaus spent three months in Johannesburg, at the invitation of Krut. Krut sponsored him to produce monoprints and editions of intaglio prints with a range of Johannesburg-based artists. They used the etching studio of the University of the Witwatersrand, but the press roller cracking half-way through the project, halting production, which gave Krut the impetus to set up his own studio. Hemminghaus aided Krut in the design of the studio, based on his own in New York. He will return in February 2003 to assist Krut in completing the infrastructure of the studio and to participate in a further contract project.

<sup>67</sup> Krut purchased an intaglio press and other equipment from the retired art publisher/printmaker Egon Guenther.

<sup>68</sup> In the USA, Krut used New York-based printmakers Maurice Payne and Randy Hemminghaus. In the UK, he sent artists to Jack Sherrif in Bath.

<sup>69</sup> As well as functioning as an art publisher, Krut organises and curates exhibitions and has conceived the publishing project of a series of art books, the Taxi Art Books. Each book in the series features a monograph of and illustrations of work by a contemporary South African artist, who is achieving acclaim, but whose work has not been researched academically. Krut collaborates with Philippa Hobbs in this project, in her role as art educator at the MTN Corporation, producing a manual for art teachers on each artist to function with the book. One of the featured artists is Jo Ractliffe, printmaking lecturer at the University of the Witwatersrand.

<sup>70</sup> Krut employed some third and fourth year students as studio assistants. Although one of their major subjects was printmaking, most of the emphasis had been on photography, video and computer-generated prints.



## CONCLUSION

South African social history has always influenced its artists, but the impact of socio-political concerns on cultural activity became manifest during the time of apartheid and with different emphasis, continues to shape artmaking in democratic South Africa. The history of the resistance movement and its effect on both fine art, and more particularly, on printmaking can be detected in many works.

The country's first democratic elections allowed artists to re-establish meaningful connections with the international art world. Workshop situations, such as *The Hourglass Project*, have enabled local artists to build up a network of contacts to sustain and enrich the creative experience. In addition, with overseas travel, exhibitions abroad and visits from foreign artists, there has been a valuable exchange of ideas. Since 1994, several influential South African artists have participated in different international Biennales, from San Paulo to Venice and the Documenta X exhibitions in Dusseldorf and international interaction was further improved by Johannesburg acting as host city to the 1995 and 1997 International Biennales. Both Biennales encouraged local and foreign artists to develop skills in the internationally contemporary media of photography, video, computer-generated imagery and installation.

Another interesting issue is that contemporary South African art, which in the recent past was so critical of social injustice, appears to have assumed a more complex stance. In general, if social issues are explored, they seem to be of a universal nature, for example sexual identity, as in the Performances of Steven Cohen; and formerly taboo subjects may often be approached with a tongue-in-cheek irony, as is seen in the work of such artists as Brett Murray. If young white artists engage with South African issues, these often relate to aspects of self-identity, self-positioning and the exploration of family history or a cocooned upbringing, in the context of the apartheid era (Williamson 1999: 40). Although black artists, comfortable with challenging the status quo, do make work condemning some government policies – for example, its inability to provide more housing for the historically disadvantaged as promised during elections, or the perception of its inattention to the HIV/AIDS crisis – criticism of the ANC seems to be an inviolable subject for white artists. However, this could be due to an overdeveloped sense of political correctness on their part.



Within South Africa, the late 1990s saw the post-colonial can of worms being opened: the question of whose work may represent whom became contentious. Some white South African women artists, such as Penny Siopis and Candice Breitz, working in a feminist mode, were castigated by a particular group of critics whose perception was that these artists were both depicting and thus attempting to “speak for” black women, and whose consideration was that this was patronising and constituted a further form of exploitation. However, artists have historically used their work to speak for others, to highlight inequalities or injustice, or merely to offer an imagined interpretation of the life of another (Arnold 1999:38). It seems that a peculiarly South African sensitivity to this issue has created a new taboo.

Over the past two years, there has been a renewed interest in painting and drawing, as some artists begin to resist the more mechanical aspects of contemporary digital media. Gallery exhibitions in Johannesburg in 2002 have featured work in these traditional media, as well as printmaking. In addition, there has been a slow but steady build-up of interest in artists who wish to function outside the current analytical discourse and who are developing an intimate and personal imagery, from portraits of family to domestic icons of nostalgia from the 1960s and 1970s.

Printmakers from the USA who have visited Johannesburg to participate in workshops have encouraged artists to consider traditional print media as legitimate artforms. Randy Hemminghaus, from New York, has a small professional printmaking studio, and there are several others within a ten-kilometre radius of his, all self-supporting. However, although printmakers do gradually build up a network of artists who wish to collaborate with them, those printmakers who work on a contract basis are often less involved with creative decisions and more with technical advice and editioning. An artist, paying for the time spent in a professional studio, is most likely to have preconceived ideas about the image to be produced. At The Caversham Press, while Christian was functioning as a co-operative, an artist would visit, explore different ideas and stay until they and Christian were both satisfied, even if repeat visits were necessary: a one-on-one creative communing of artist and printmaker.

The various ways that Christian chose to function as a commercial entity influenced the release into the art market of the prints, and often their reception. However, in his latest role as Creative Director, receiving funding for specific creative programs, and strengthening his relationships with a core of sponsors and supporters in the USA, it would appear that The Caversham Press as a fine art printmaking facility is lost to the majority of South African artists; and that its published prints are lost to the South African art market. But if this is so



then it speaks of the current, twenty-first century socio-economic situation, with its emphasis on the 'global village', and the effect of that thinking on the South African art world.

Now the buzzwords are 'deadline', 'dialogue', 'interaction', 'exchange workshop'.

Printmaking is an ideal medium for the collaborative short-term workshop, supervised by a master printer. As an edition of prints by each artist is produced, the publisher may give the artist prints in exchange for services, thus keeping the overall cost of the project down.

Printmaking projects often have themes, and the control exercised by the publisher – for example, in the choice of plate size or technique used – may result in inhibiting an individual artist's impulse. Also, although working within thematic and technical limitations may enhance creativity and challenge artists, if the project is market-driven, the high print quality demanded by a print produced in such a limited time frame might inhibit more spontaneous or experimental work. As a result, the choice of participating artists is important, to ensure a successful outcome.

Interestingly, due to the poor Rand exchange rate with the British Pound and US Dollar, South Africa has become a relatively inexpensive venue for artists to produce editions of prints, compared to the cost of producing prints in the UK or USA. This could be a potential area to be investigated for cultural tourism. An edition of prints produced in South Africa may also have two prices on release of the publication: one for the local market and one for the international market, although this is not an ideal situation.

The Johannesburg art market for prints appears to be in a state of limbo. The Caversham Press is no longer producing prints for the local market. Commissions at other studios, usually by publisher David Krut, are marketed primarily overseas, although he is considering a drive to promote the works locally. Funded projects, such as those produced at the Artist Proof Studio, never seem to reach the mainstream fine print market. Most commercial galleries exhibiting an artist prefer to promote their one-off works, such as a painting, rather than prints, as a higher price is charged and consequently a larger commission may be earned. The exception to this is Alet Vorster of Art On Paper, who has been active in promoting prints produced at local studios.

The buying public is changing. There are many private collectors who are building up personal collections of contemporary South African art. They frequently buy prints, as a print offers the acquisition of an excellent quality work by a significant artist at a reasonable price. However, the hoped-for demand for artwork by an emerging black middle class has not materialised. In addition, the corporations are slowing or halting their collecting policies.



Printmakers like Christian and publishers such as Krut have recognised this and actively established international outlets for their prints.

Rural community-based self-empowerment groups are beginning to explore basic printmaking techniques as ways of extending their papermaking and embroidery projects. These products are distributed at craft outlets locally and internationally. In addition, collaboration between these groups and formal printmaking is another area for potential exploration, and for these groups to enter the formal fine art market. In 2001, for example, Mark Attwood of The Artists' Press published a book, *The Ultimate Safari*, with text by the South African Nobel Prize winning author Nadine Gordimer and lithographic illustrations drawn by three Mozambican refugee women.

At present, there are few opportunities for students from the tertiary institutions to participate in the mainstream fine print world. Visiting printmakers and artists are pleased to collaborate and share skills with established or emerging black artists, but less so with formally trained fine art students. The aftermath of current cultural collaborations is often that the local participants are unable to put their newly learnt skills into practice, since they lack a printmaking infrastructure, technical aid and the funds necessary to further obtain these. Having made my own prints as a student and artist and acted as printmaker for other artists within such collaborations, I would like to see a shift in this mindset, allowing for interaction to occur across a much broader spectrum of artists and students. A mutually supportive network needs to be developed between emerging informally trained black artists and formally trained young black and white artists from the tertiary institutions, to complement knowledge gained and encourage each other.

As South Africa has undergone political transformation, so printmaking has gone through a transition. The almost self-indulgent celebratory nature of projects such as *The Johannesburg Centenary Portfolio* and the fresh national idealism behind *Spirit of our Stories* already seems to be part of another era. From the establishment of The Caversham Press in 1985, there was a steady growth of printmaking activity among South African artists that peaked in the late 1990s. But the downswing in the economy from the late 1990s onwards has forced printmakers to adapt to changing conditions in order to survive financially and this has changed the printmaking experience for many artists, as more projects become market-driven. New forces in the South African printmaking arena are introducing elements of the internationalism reflected in the wider art world.



Printmaking as an artform in Johannesburg has enormous potential: should more artists begin to make works in print, even under less than ideal creative conditions, demand may be stimulated in the art market, leading to more artists wishing to print. In addition, when printmaking is slowly integrated into the institutions, encouraging students to print, and skills learned at workshops by emerging artists are made sustainable, a future for the medium will be ensured. If local printmakers are able to maintain a balance between income-generating workshops or contract printing and taking time with fine artists to fully explore this exciting medium, the future for South African printmaking could be bright.



## APPENDIX I: SIX PROJECTS: A LIST OF ARTISTS AND ARTWORKS

The following projects, or thematic bodies of work, have been chosen to illustrate both the changing trends in local printmaking and the technical and conceptual development of projects undertaken at The Caversham Press from 1985-2000.

The Johannesburg Centenary Portfolio – 1986

Decade of Young Artists – 1990

Art Meets Science: Flowers As Images – 1992

Spirit of our Stories – 1995

Ubu Centenaire: Histoire d'un farceur criminel – 1997

The Hourglass Project: A Women's Vision – 1999

DATA:

artist; *title*; date; medium; size: h x w in cm; edition size;

**the works with bold type are the works discussed in this thesis**

### **1986: JOHANNESBURG CENTENARY PRINT PORTFOLIO**

**Guiseppe Cattaneo, *The Gable* (1986). 28 colour screenprint on 290 gms Fabriano Tiepolo, 42 x 64 cm, edition of 100.**

**Robert Hodgins, *Encounter* (1986). 10 colour screenprint on 290 gms Fabriano Tiepolo, 39 x 53,5 cm, edition of 100.**

**Ezrom Legae, *Quarter to Twelve to Implosion* (1986). 8 colour screenprint on 290 gms Fabriano Tiepolo, 55 x 38 cm, edition of 100.**

Karel Nel, *In-tact* (1986). 7 colour screenprint with collage on Fabriano Tiepolo, 52,5 x 45 cm, edition of 100.

Malcolm Payne, *Penumbra* (1986). 9 colour screenprint on 290 gms Fabriano Tiepolo, 73 x 54 cm, edition of 100.



## 1991: DECADE OF YOUNG ARTISTS

Malcolm Payne (1983 Standard Bank Young Artist of the Year Award winner), *Blind Spots and Gods* 1991. 8 colour screenprint on 300 gms BFG Rives, 85,3 x 60,5 cm, edition of 14.

Peter Schutz (1984 Standard Bank Young Artist of the Year Award winner), *Umzumbe Trophy* 1991. 10 colour screenprint on 300 gms BFK Rives, 85,4 x 59,7 cm, edition of 14.

Marion Arnold (1985 Standard Bank Young Artist of the Year Award winner), *Incident* 1991. 10 colour screenprint on 300 gms BFK Rives, 59,8 x 85,2 cm, edition of 14.

Gavin Younge (1986 Standard Bank Young Artist of the Year Award winner), *Flight* 1991. 16 colour screenprint on 300 gms BFK Rives, 83,2 x 56,5 cm, edition of 14.

William Kentridge (1987 Standard Bank Young Artist of the Year Award winner) *Couple*; 1991. 11 colour screenprint on 300 gms BFK Rives, 98,0 x 69,5 cm, edition of 14.

Margaret Vorster (1988 Standard Bank Young Artist of the Year Award winner), *Closing Time in Arcadia* 1991. 12 colour screenprint on 300 gms BFK Rives, 60 x 90 cm, edition of 14.

Mmagabo Helen Sebidi (1989 Standard Bank Young Artist of the Year Award winner), *Don't Let It Go* 1991. 16 colour screenprint on 300 gms BFK Rives, 85 x 60 cm, edition of 14.

Feé Halstead Berning (1990 Standard Bank Young Artist of the Year Joint Winner), *The Arrival* 1991. 10 colour screenprint on 300 gms BFK Rives, 61,5 x 49,5 cm, edition of 14.

Bonnie Ntshalintshali (1990 Standard Bank Young Artist of the Year Joint Award winner), *Jonah* 1991. 11 colour screenprint on 300 gms BFK Rives, 80 x 62,3 cm, edition of 14.

Andries Botha (1991 Standard Bank Young Artist of the Year Award winner), *Minister, Minister, Waar Sal Jy Skuil?* 1991. 9 colour screenprint on 300 gms BKF Rives, 33 x 64,2 cm, edition of 14.

## 1992: ART MEETS SCIENCE: FLOWERS AS IMAGE

### BOTANICAL ARTISTS:

Gillian Condry, *Erythrina Abyssinica* 1992. Screenprint, 44 x 28,5 cm, edition of 75.

Gillian Condry, *Erythrina Humeana* 1992. Screenprint, 44 x 28,5 cm, edition of 50.

Gillian Condry, *Pelargonium Hystrix* 1992. Handcoloured etching, 25 x 19,5 cm, edition of 50.

Douglas Goode, *Chiemanimani* 1992. Screenprint, 45,5 x 35 cm, edition of 75.



Douglas Goode, *Visitor* 1992. Screenprint, 35 x 45 cm, edition of 75.

Douglas Goode, *Modjadji and Friend* 1992. Screenprint, 25 x 20,5 cm, edition of 50.

**John Manning, *Datura* 1992. Handcoloured stone lithograph, 35,5 x 26 cm, edition of 50.**

**John Manning, *Gloriosa Superba* 1992. Screenprint, 28 x 20,5 cm, edition of 50.**

John Manning, *Euryops Abrotanifolius* 1992. Screenprint, 27,5 x 20 cm, edition of 75.

Gerhard Marx, "*Halfmens*" *Richtersveld, After the Rain* 1992. Screenprint, 37 x 53 cm, edition of 45.

Gerhard Marx, *Pachypodium Namaquanum* 1992. Screenprint, 38 x 53 cm, edition of 45.

Gerhard Marx, *Huernia Zebrina* 1992. Handcoloured stone lithograph, 18,5 x 24 cm, edition of 50.

Elsa Pooley, *Clivia miniata var. citrina* 1992. Screenprint, 59 x 76 cm, edition of 50.

Elsa Pooley, *Hyphaene coriana – Lala Palm* 1992. Screenprint, 72,5 x 54 cm, edition of 45.

Elsa Pooley, *Gloriosa superba* 1992. Handcoloured stone lithograph, 25 x 20 cm, edition of 50.

#### FINE ARTISTS:

Bronwen Findlay, *Agapanthus* 1992. Screenprint, 75,5 x 35,6 cm, edition of 45.

Bronwen Findlay, *Clivia* 1992. Screenprint, 36 x 22 cm, edition of 50.

Bronwen Findlay, *Leonotis Leonorus* 1992. Screenprint, 50 x 35,5 cm, edition of 40.

Hilary Graham, *Amongst the Blooms* 1992. Screenprint, 34 x 56 cm, edition of 50.

Hilary Graham, *An Evening Gathering* 1992. Screenprint, 32,5 x 57,5 cm, edition of 50.

Hilary Graham, *Fynette's Flowers* 1992. Screenprint, 21 x 27 cm, edition of 50.

**Karel Nel, *Boat of the Oblivious Bloom* 1992. Stone lithograph; 25 x 20 cm, edition of 50.**

Karel Nel, *Palmer's Flare* 1992. Stone lithograph, 34 x 18,5 cm, edition of 40.

Karel Nel, *Somewhere a Brahmarandra Blooms Quietly* 1992. Stone lithograph, 33 x 28 cm, edition of 40.

**V. D. (Derek) Nxumalo, *Manor Garden* 1992. Screenprint, 26,5 x 20,5 cm, edition of 50.**

V. D. (Derek) Nxumalo, *Tugela Mountain View* 1992. Screenprint, 78 x 60 cm, edition of 30.

V. D. (Derek) Nxumalo, *African Housing* 1992. Screenprint, 60 x 78,5 cm, edition of 50.

Colin Richards, *The Only Good Flower* 1992. Handcoloured etching, 25 x 20 cm, edition of 50.



Colin Richards, *A Taste of my own Medicine* 1992. Handcoloured etching, 30 x 22,5 cm, edition of 50.

Colin Richards, *In the Bud* 1992. Handcoloured etching, 30 x 22,5 cm, edition of 50.

### 1995: THE SPIRIT OF OUR STORIES

#### ARTISTS FROM THE DAKAWA TRAINING PROGRAMME:

Noluthando Beyi, *Qamatha* 1994. Screenprinted lithograph, 34,5 x 26,5 cm, edition of 40.

Noluthando Beyi, *Traditional Wedding (Umtshato wesinto)* 1994. Screenprint, 26,5 x 40 cm, edition of 45.

Noluthando Beyi *Witch Doctor (Igqurakazi)* 1992. Linocut, edition of 50.

Noluthando Beyi, *The Prophecy* 1994. Screenprint, 26 x 40 cm, edition of 45.

Edith Bukani, *The Bakhetwas* 1994. Screenprinted lithograph, 24 x 34 cm, edition of 40.

Edith Bukani, *Animal Trap* 1994. Screenprint, 26,5 x 40 cm, edition of 45.

**Edith Bukani, *Strict Parents* 1994. Screenprint, 26 x 40 cm, edition of 45.**

Edith Bukani, *Manguni's Women* 1994. Linocut, edition of 50.

Roxandra Dardegan, *The Great Xhosa Cattle Killing* 1994. Screenprint, 42,5 x 58 cm, edition of 45.

Roxandra Dardegan, *Bull-killing Ceremony* 1994. Stone lithograph, 26,5 x 33,5 cm, edition of 35.

#### ARTISTS FROM THE ARDMORE STUDIO:

Zenzane Mazibuko, *Crocodile Catches Chameleon (Ingwenga ibamba unwabu)* 1995. Screenprint, 36 x 23,5 cm, edition of 65.

Zenzane Mazibuko, *Cow Being Bitten by Dogs (Inkomo ilunywainja)* 1995. Screenprint, 17 x 21 cm, edition of 65.

Zenzane Mazibuko, *Two Goats and Skirts (Izimbuzi ezimbili nezikhethi)* 1995. Screenprint, 14 x 8 cm, edition of 65.

Miriam Ngubeni, *Goats and Men (Imbuzi namadoda)* 1995. Screenprint, 43,5 x 28 cm, edition of 50.

Miriam Ngubeni, *Adam and Eve* 1995. Screenprint, 36 x 44 cm, edition of 50.

Bonnie Ntshalintshali, *Daniel and the Lions (uDaniel namabhubezi)* 1995. Screenprint, 83 x 53 cm, edition of 50.

Bonnie Ntshalintshali, *Mother and Child (Ukuzalwa kukujesu)* 1995. Screenprint, 43 x 67 cm, edition of 50.



**Wonderboy Nxumalo, *Making Fire Without Matches* 1995. Screenprint, diameter of 42,5 cm, edition of 45.**

Mavis Shabalala, *Angel and Animals (Ingelosi nezilwane)* 1995. Screenprint, edition of 60.

Mavis Shabalala, *Men looking at Elephant and Lion (Amadoda amabili ...)* 1995. Screenprint, 44 x 33 cm, edition of 60.

Punch Shabalala, *Magic Beasts (Umlingo wezilwane)* 1995. Screenprint, 76 x 50 cm, edition of 50.

Punch Shabalala, *Man Riding Herd of Cows (Indoda igibele ...)* 1995. Screenprint, 40 x 37 cm, edition of 50.

Virginia Xaba, *Snake, Zebra, Crocodile (Inyoka, Idube, Nengwenga)* 1995. Screenprint, 31,5 x 56 cm, edition of 50.

#### ARTISTS FROM THE EDUCATION TRUST:

Nnoto Ditshego, *Raborukhu* 1994. Handcoloured lithograph, 29 x 41,5 cm, edition of 30.

Simphiwe Mfeka, *Peace Drum* 1994. Screenprint, 41,5 x 59,5 cm, edition of 55.

Sthembiso Sibisi, *Song of the Hills* 1994. Screenprint, 55,5 x 35,5 cm, edition of 60.

Sthembiso Sibisi, *Morning Meeting* 1994. Handcoloured lithograph, edition of 25.

Sthembiso Sibisi, *Amazayoni* 1994. Etching, 30 x 19,5 cm, edition of 50.

Sthembiso Sibisi, *Shembe is the Way* 1994. Etching, 30 x 49 cm, edition of 50.

**Sthembiso Sibisi, *Precious Gift* 1995. Screenprinted lithograph, 29 x 42 cm, edition of 50.**

Sthembiso Sibisi, *The Story Teller* 1994. Linocut, 25,5 x 25 cm, edition of 60.

Vusi Zwane, *Moonlight Magic* 1995. Screenprint, 45 x 59,5 cm, edition of 60.

Vusi Zwane, *Gonqonqo* 1995. Etching, 30 x 43,5 cm, edition of 45.

Vusi Zwane, *Village of Bhakhuba* 1995. Linocut, 30,5 x 50 cm, edition of 50.

Vusi Zwane, *Out on a Limb* 1995. Screenprinted lithograph, 28 x 44 cm, edition of 35.

#### ESTABLISHED ARTISTS:

Marion Arnold, *Irma in a Mask Remembering* 1995. Screenprint, 42 x 59,5 cm, edition of 40.

Shayle Bester, *African Moonlight Magic* 1995. Screenprint, 43 x 60 cm, edition of 50.

Elza Botha, *Rainbow Snake* 1994. Screenprint, 60,5 x 43,5 cm, edition of 45.

Elza Botha, *Nomkhubulwana's House* 1994. Linocut, 60 x 43 cm, edition of 45.

Elza Botha, *Nomkhubulwana* 1994. Linocut, 60 x 43 cm, edition of 45.



Elza Botha, *Nomdede* 1994. Linocut, 43 x 60 cm, edition of 45.

Hilary Graham and Brian Walter (image and verse)

- i) *She goes out for Water*
- ii) *She Walks by Moonlight*
- iii) *She is one with the Water*
- iv) *The Water Rages and the Earth Drinks*

*Sihamba-nge-nyanga*

Screenprint, sizes: (i) 30 x 55 cm, (ii) 31 x 63 cm, (iii) 33 x 54 cm  
(iv) 33 x 60,5 cm (text) 30 x 29 cm,  
edition of 45.

William Kentridge, *The Head and the Lload ...* 1995. Etching, 30 x 37,5 cm, edition of 50.

William Kentridge, *A Nicely Built City ...* 1995. Etching, 29,5 x 37,5 cm, edition of 50.

William Kentridge, *My dear friend, am I not your soul* 1995. Screenprint, 46 x 61,5 cm,  
edition of 55.

Georgie Papageorge, *Gondwanaland Circle I* 1995. Screenprint, 48 x 37 cm, edition of 55.

**Mmagabo Helen Sebidi, *Lebelo, Le a jelwa* 1995. Screenprint, 43 x 70 cm, edition of 60.**

Mmagabo Helen Sebidi, *The Chameleon Story* 1995. Screenprint, 32 x 47,5 cm, edition of 45.

Mmagabo Helen Sebidi, *Tselane, tselane, tselane* 1995. Screenprint, 32,5 x 47,5 cm, edition  
of 45.

Vuminkosi Zulu, *King Manqoba* 1995. Screenprint, 42,5 x 59 cm, edition of 60.

Vuminkosi Zulu, *Monkey and the Crocodile* 1995. Linocut, 33,5 x 49,5 cm, edition of 60.

### **1997: UBU CENTENAIRE – HISTOIRE D'UN FARCEUR CRIMINEL**

cover page screenprinted with the above words by Robert Hodgins

DEBORAH BELL:

*Ubu potentate* 1997. Etching and drypoint with chin collé, 49,5 x 34 cm, edition of 50.

*Salutations* 1997. Etching and drypoint with chin collé, 49,5 x 34 cm, edition of 50.

*The Grand Tour* 1997. Etching and drypoint with chin collé, 49,5 x 34 cm. edition of 50.

*Seat of Power* 1997. Etching and drypoint with chin collé, 49,5 x 34 cm, edition of 50.

*Left Luggage* 1997. Etching and drypoint with chin collé, 49,5 x 34 cm, edition of 50.

*Ubu, Ma Ubu and Ma Ubu's Lover* 1997. Etching and drypoint with chin collé, 49,5 x 34 cm,  
edition of 50.



*Ma Ubu, Political Advisor* 1997. Etching and drypoint with chin collé, 49,5 x 34 cm, edition of 50.

*Ma Ubu* 1997. Etching and drypoint with chin collé, 49,5 x 34 cm, edition of 50.

ROBERT HODGINS:

*France – The Dreyfus Affair – 1896 ...* 1996. Screenprint, 27 x 31,5 cm, edition of 50.

*Mid-Atlantic – “Titanic” 1912* 1996. Screenprint, 27,5 x 29,5 cm, edition of 50.

*Berlin – Inflation – 1923* 1996. Screenprint, 27 x 29,5 cm, edition of 50.

*Paris with Fuhrrer – June 1940* 1996. Screenprint, 26 x 35 cm, edition of 50.

*Pittsburgh 1944 – September* 1996. Screenprint, 24,5 x 30 cm, edition of 50.

*Central Africa? East Africa? 1960's* 1996. Screenprint, 24 x 30 cm, edition of 50.

***South Africa 197? – Interrogator* 1996. Screenprint, 26 x 30 cm, edition of 50.**

*Rwanda? Afghanistan? Balkans? 1996* 1996. Screenprint, 26 x 30 cm, edition of 50.

WILLIAM KENTRIDGE:

*Act I Scene 2* 1996-7. Etching, drypoint and engraving (2 plates), 25 x 30 cm, edition of 50.

***Act II Scene 1*** 1996-7. Etching, drypoint and engraving (2 plates), 25 x 30 cm, edition of 50.

*Act II scene 5* 1996-7. Etching, drypoint and engraving (2 plates), 25 x 30 cm, edition of 50.

*Act III Scene 4* 1996-7. Etching, drypoint and engraving (2 plates), 25 x 30 cm, edition of 50.

*Act III Scene 9* 1996-7. Etching, drypoint and engraving (2 plates), 25 x 30 cm, edition of 50.

*Act IV Scene 1* 1996-7. Etching, drypoint and engraving (2 plates), 25 x 30 cm, edition of 50.

*Act IV Scene 7* 1996-7. Etching, drypoint and engraving (2 plates), 25 x 30 cm, edition of 50.

*Act V Scene 4* 1996-7. Etching, drypoint and engraving (2 plates), 25 x 30 cm, edition of 50.

### **1999: THE HOURGLASS PROJECT: A WOMAN'S VISION**

**Lynne Allen (New Jersey, USA), *My Winter Count* 1999. Combination screenprint stone lithograph linocut chin collé, 67 x 97 cm, edition of 40.**

Deborah Bell (Gauteng, South Africa), *Shining through the Shadows* 1999. Drypoint with chin collé, 96 x 59 cm, edition of 35.

Bongi Bengu (Cape Town, South Africa), *Vukani* 1999. Screenprint, 60 x 80,5 cm, edition of 40.



Cristina Cardenas (Tucson, USA), *Zapatista* 1999. Combination screenprint stone lithograph chin collé, 70 x 97 cm, edition of 44.

Pip Curling (Harare, Zimbabwe), *Zulu Woman Mantra* 1999. Screenprint, 76 x 61 cm, edition of 40.

Bronwen Findlay (Durban, South Africa), *Plates Full* 1999. Screenprint, 90 x 59 cm, edition of 35.

**Sheila Flynn (Durban, South Africa), *Bone-Doings and Memories* 1999. Screenprint, 84 x 54 cm, edition of 25.**

Fiaza Galdhari (Durban, South Africa), *Depths of Devotion* 1999. Combination stone lithograph chin collé and deep etched embossing, 51 x 50 cm, edition of 35.

**Patricia Hurl (Dublin, Ireland), *Tireanna* 1999. Screenprint, 82 x 61 cm, edition of 35.**

Elaine Kennedy (Dublin, Ireland), *PASSAGE* 1999. Combination collagraph etching chin collé, 100 x 51 cm, edition of 25.

Lynne Marshall (Atlanta, USA), *First Interview* 1999. Screenprint, 80 x 60 cm, edition of 40.

Semina Mpofu (Harare, Zimbabwe), *Arise* 1999. Combination collagraph with linocut chin collé, 66 x 46 cm, edition of 18.

Sophie Peters (Cape Town, South Africa), *Times from my past* 1999. Linocut with stenciled colour. 80 x 60 cm, edition of 60.

Mildred Thompson (Atlanta, USA), *Advancing Impulses 36* 1999. Screenprint, 96 x 65,5 cm, edition of 40.

Grace Tshivukhe (Gauteng, South Africa), *In Trust* 1999. Screenprint, 59 x 81 cm, edition of 45.



## APPENDIX II

### CURRICULUM VITAE: MALCOLM CHRISTIAN

BORN: Durban, 1950

EDUCATED: Durban

#### QUALIFICATIONS:

- 1974: National Diploma (Fine Arts), Natal College for Advanced Technical Education, Sculpture major
- 1974: National Certificate (Photography), Natal College for Advanced Technical Education
- 1975: Post-graduate Certificate in Printmaking, Croydon College of Art and Design, London
- 1977: Higher Diploma in Printmaking, Natal College for Advanced Technical Education
- 1984: MA (FA), University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg

#### AWARDS:

- 1974: Emma Smith Overseas Study Award

#### EMPLOYMENT:

- 1975: in-house photographer for Hallen and Theron Architects
- 1976: part-time lecturer in printmaking at Natal College for Advanced Technical Education, M. L. Sultan and the University of Durban-Westville
- 1977: appointed Head of Printmaking, University of Natal, (Pietermaritzburg)
- 1981: appointed Lecturer, Printmaking, University of the Witwatersrand
- 1985: established The Caversham Press

NOTE: in the biography, to facilitate an easier reading flow, I have used the following acronyms:

NCATE: Natal College for Advanced Technical Education

CCAD: Croydon College of Art and Design

UNP: The University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg

WITS: The University of the Witwatersrand



## BIOGRAPHY OF MALCOLM CHRISTIAN

(1970–1985)

Over the six years of working with Malcolm Christian, I learned much of his life leading up to the establishment of The Caversham Press. The information for this appendix was obtained from numerous informal conversations, one recorded, but not transcribed, interview, given me on 9<sup>th</sup> March 1999 at The Caversham Press and an e-mail interview conducted on 9<sup>th</sup> September 1999. The information is compressed into the following text.

Christian was born in Durban on 10 October 1950. He attended Durban High School and matriculated without studying art. Initially, he studied architecture, but dropped out of the course after nine months. Bowing to parental pressure, he spent eighteen months studying accountancy, but by his own admission, spent more time doodling in the margins of the ledgers than working on them. He applied to NCATE to study Fine Art, and was accepted.

In 1971, Christian found the Fine Arts Department at NCATE to be a stimulating and exciting environment. Lecturers included Andrew Verster, Patrick O'Connor, Cliff Bestell, Gavin Younge and Paul Stopforth. He maintains that although the Pop Art era was well established in Europe and the USA, it was only at this time that it came to the fore in South Africa, bringing a positive energy about the role of Fine Arts that imbued the whole department. Christian completed his three-year National Diploma in 1974, majoring in sculpture.

In his final year, Christian developed a passion for photography, and enrolled for an evening course, obtaining a National Certificate in Photography. On completing his studies, he worked full-time as a photographer for the Durban firm of architects, Hallen and Theron. He also held a part-time lecturing post in photography at NCATE. Subsequently, he was awarded the Emma Smith Bursary to study in England.

Christian applied to CCAD in London to study sculpture and film-making. He was disappointed to find, on his arrival, that the fledgling film department was not functioning well, and the course structures seemed mediocre. As chance would have it, he had traveled to London with another South African, Jeff Rankin, a fellow student from NCATE. Rankin had majored in Graphic Illustration, and had applied to CCAD for registration in their international post-graduate printmaking course. On his suggestion, Christian approached the



printmaking course leaders, John Berry and Dennis Massey, and they agreed to give him a trial period, as he was inexperienced in printmaking.

Christian completed the course, obtaining a Post-graduate Certificate in Printmaking, and maintains that the training given formed a solid base for his future printmaking practice. The standards were high, and good studio practice was encouraged. After his final assessment, moderated by Peter Blake, Christian received an invitation from Barry Maritz to lecture at NCATE.

During his stay in London, Christian had married Rosmund Davey, who had joined him from Durban, and together they returned to Natal. These three events – the chance coincidence of studying printmaking, his marriage to Ros and their joint unhappiness at living away from Natal – formed the basis for Christian's future, and ultimately for the establishment of The Caversham Press. Christian describes himself as a romantic idealist with a strong faith in serendipity tempered with some practical sense.

Professionally, Christian returned to face an unsettled eight-year period. His first job at NCATE was hampered by the institute's reluctance to employ him as a permanent staff member, due to his perceived diversity in qualifications. He taught printmaking to senior students part-time at the NCATE, with Professor Terry King and worked part-time at M. L. Sultan and the University of Durban-Westville with Maurice Khan. At the same time, he studied part time, obtaining a Higher Diploma in Printmaking at NCATE.

Eighteen months after his return to Durban, Christian was offered the post of Head of Printmaking at UNP, to replace Frank Waltwager. Christian took over this position at the beginning of the second academic term in 1977.

His predecessor at UNP, Waltwager, was a printmaker from Chicago who had run the department for four years. Christian was struck by the differences in approach between the American-trained Waltwager and himself, an English-trained printmaker. Waltwager had taught sophisticated, non-traditional printmaking processes that were popular in the States at that time.

Christian began teaching etching techniques in the more traditional manner, as he had been taught them. He learned other techniques of printmaking as he needed to teach them to the students. For example, before introducing screenprinting, he created his own body of



screenprints. In addition, he began some plate lithography with Stephen Inggs, using an etching press, again building up a body of his own lithographs before teaching it.

While at UNP, Christian began studying for his Master of Arts degree through that institution. In 1980, Christian completed the practical component of his studies, and this body of work was exhibited at the Market Gallery in Johannesburg. The exhibition consisted mainly of etchings, screen prints and a few lithographs.

At this point, Alan Crump from WITS was establishing a new printmaking department and approached Christian to run the screenprinting and lithographic facilities. Christian accepted the position, and the commencement of his appointment coincided with his exhibition. During his four years at WITS, Christian completed his Master of Arts degree through the UNP.

At WITS, Christian was able to set up a department from the start. According to Christian, the Fine Arts Department of WITS in the early 1980s under Crump was highly energized, and committed to a high standard of professionalism from both students and staff. There was an expectation that the academic staff should write, publish or exhibit their own work and continue adding to their own qualifications. This was a pre-requisite when applying for sabbatical leave and university sponsorship. Christian found this competitive academic environment disconcerting, and in addition, his family disliked life in Johannesburg.

Christian maintains that his establishment of The Caversham Press stemmed from his basic antipathy towards the fragmented nature of institutional teaching. This led to his desire to be able to determine his own way of working and interacting with artists on an individual basis, using traditional printmaking methods of image creation.

While he was on holiday in Natal in 1984, considering applying for a post at the University of Cape Town, he discovered the old Methodist church that would become the home of The Caversham Press. At the time, the family were spending a day in the KwaZulu-Natal Midlands with the ceramicists, David and Michelle Walters, at the Caversham Mill. Christian walked past the derelict church next door, and finding the door standing open, entered. He was impressed with the seclusion, the quality of the space, and the feeling of stillness, all of which he felt would make a wonderful printmaking studio. He had been inspired in England by the number of small, rural, co-operative studios operating as artists' retreats.

Christian discovered a commemorative stone inside the church, inscribed with a text that had special relevance from his childhood. He felt that the inscription, which is a text from Micah,



was a life philosophy he subscribed to and wished to carry over to his working circumstances. It reads: "To do justly, to love mercy and to live humbly with thy God". For Christian, this coincidence was too strong to ignore and he decided to try to acquire the building from the Methodist Church. As chance would have it, the Church was no longer able to afford the maintenance of that property, and sold it to Christian for the value of the land alone.

Christian has a strong belief in fate and feels that many factors conspired to lead him ultimately to found The Caversham Press. Both his last minute decision to study printmaking and his discovery of the open church with the inscribed stone contributed to his unflinching faith in the continued existence of The Press. His ability to survive financially, against all odds, pays tribute to the man whose creative vision, direction and dreams for the future of his studio help to inspire on-going support from artists, curators and sponsors alike.



## APPENDIX III

### LIST OF FACILITIES AT THE CAVERSHAM PRESS

#### 1. RELIEF PRINTING

Vandercook Universal III Letterpress: bed size: 47 cm x 62 cm  
polymer plate maker

#### 2. INTAGLIO

Hunter-Penrose Littlejohn: manual press; bed size: 52 cm x 95 cm  
Sawyer: manual or motorised press; bed size: 90 cm x 145 cm

#### 3. LITHOGRAPHY

Manfeld: manual press; bed size: 76 cm x 100 cm  
plate grainer: bed size: 90 cm x 120 cm  
stones: average size: 40 cm x 60 cm and 30 cm x 45 cm

#### 4. SCREENPRINT

Screenmore: one-arm squeegee with vacuum bed; bed size: 120 cm x 170 cm  
exposure unit: vacuum contact frame; maximum screen size: 150 cm x 210 cm

#### 5. BINDERY

standing press: 52 cm x 40 cm x 55 cm opening  
nipping presses x 2: 37 cm x 24 cm x 10 cm opening  
laying presses: 35 cm & 76 cm  
backing press: 90 cm  
guillotine, lever type: 72 cm  
board-cutter: 110 cm



## ACCOMMODATION AT THE CAVERSHAM PRESS

### 1. THE GARDEN APARTMENT AND THE HODGINS APARTMENT

Two single-bedroom apartments, each equipped with a kitchenette, a bathroom and a living area.

### 2. THE KELLOGG COTTAGE

A cottage which can be converted into either a single bedroom space with a large living/working area, equipped with a kitchenette and a bathroom; or into a two-bedroom space with smaller shared living/working area, kitchenette and bathroom.

### 3. THE STUDIO FLATLET

A one-roomed studio flat, equipped with a kitchenette and a bathroom.

All artists have access to the main printmaking studio but each apartment has a facility allowing for individual preparatory work.

All the accommodation has self-catering facilities.



APPENDIX IV: *A STATE OF READINESS*

The practical component of this study, entitled *A state of readiness*, relates directly to my personal experience of living with a spouse suffering from depression and mood swings. Since the mid-1990s I have engaged mainly with social issues in my own art making. Although I have come to understand that the creative impulse may take on many forms, I believe that an artist has the right to comment on a larger life than one's own. Lucy Lippard (1995:174), in describing "a basic and painful conflict [which] is set up when an artist wants to make art and at the same time wants to participate more broadly in the culture" says that:

a developed feminist consciousness brings with it an altered concept of reality and morality that is crucial to the art being made and to the lives lived with that art. We take for granted that making art is not simply "expressing oneself", but is a far broader and more important task: expressing oneself as a member of a larger unity or comm/unity, so that in speaking for oneself one is also speaking for those who cannot speak.

Given the above, I took up the challenge to use my practical area of study as a metaphor for healing my relationship with my husband. The body of work takes on the form of a very personalised domestic first aid kit, that serves as a symbol for my role in the relationship, always alert to identify and ready to cope with emotional crisis. Although this work was born from a deeply hidden part of my marriage, confronting it in a tangible manner – which has manifested in writings either screenprinted into handmade books or hand-embroidered onto bandages – has created resonance for many others.

Beginning a tentative exploration of this subject, and discussing my work, writings and ideas with other artists, fellow students and some friends, I sensed a growing interest. These discussions often led to others confiding in me that either they or someone close to them had suffered depression. Demitri and Janice Peplos (1987:3) comment that, on starting research for the book *Overcoming Depression*, they expected a lukewarm reaction from friends and others outside the psychiatric arena. However, they were overwhelmed with confidences about depressed family members. They maintain that over 20 million Americans will suffer an episode of depression or mania, and that one in five families will be affected by this illness (Peplos & Peplos 1987:3). So although engaging with a sensitive area of my own life, I seemed to be making some kind of larger social observation.



Peplos and Peplos (1987:167) state that “many factors influence the family’s initial response to the onset of the illness: some members need to protect themselves with the cloak of denial; almost all invent theories or take responsibility in an attempt to explain the changes in behaviour”. They go on to say that the most common emotions experienced by the family are confusion, isolation, embarrassment, anger and guilt. A vicious cycle develops wherein the family, lacking understanding of the nature of depression, offer attention and assurances of care. However, when these attempts prove fruitless to impact on the mood, the family members become frustrated and resentful or angry, further enhancing the sense of hopelessness of the ill relative (1987:169).

The spouse will suffer the most impact, and may respond to their partner’s hopelessness in a very personal manner, looking for the cause of the problem within their immediate situation (Peplos & Peplos 1987:149). Fear of further angering their partner or inflaming a volatile state may lead to the spouse attempting to mollify as a coping strategy (Peplos & Peplos 1987:174).

In my personal situation, my first reaction to the primary onset of my husband’s depression was to try to placate and pacify him, and this reaction formulated the idea of domestic first aid as a symbol for attending to his emotional needs. Having had medical training, I understood the essential uselessness of a first aid box when faced with a critical medical emergency, and related this to the sense of the complete inadequacy of a normal soothing response in dealing with a depressed person. The first aid kit that I have created consists of a tin ammunition box, commandeered as a first aid box, filled with embroidered texts on bandages, and screen-printed books of bandaging instructions combined with poetic texts. The kit is supported by large hanging scrolls alluding to first aid instruction charts. The text and poetry, transcribed in Appendix V, are my own writings made during the years of my husband’s depression.

Some families have an old biscuit tin or tea caddy with the bits and pieces of a first aid kit, which becomes part of that family’s history. My husband’s recreation is hunting, and I have used one of his old ammunition boxes as the container for this kit. A further link to ammunition is provided by using old cartridge boxes as containers for cotton wool, safety pins and so on. Although the primary reference is the words between marriage partners that act as weapons, there is an underlying threat or fear of violence inherent in this object, relating to firearms.

The correlation between depression and suicide is well documented, and this is an added fear that the spouse must live with. Richard Brandt, in discussing the rationality of suicide states



that: “depression, like any severe emotional experience, tends to primitivise one’s intellectual processes. It restricts the range of one’s survey of the possibilities ... and seriously affects one’s judgment about probabilities” (1975:71). Although one may not be in danger of personal attack by the ill partner, there is an ongoing fear that one’s spouse will harm himself. The psychiatrist Elaine Hilberman describes the state of constant dread experienced by women living with repetitive trauma, saying that “events even remotely connected with violence – sirens, thunder, a slamming door – elicit fear. There was chronic apprehension of imminent doom, of something terrible always about to happen ... the women remained vigilant, unable to relax or to sleep” (cited in Herman 1992:86).

As well as developing coping strategies to respond to one’s partner, one needs escape mechanisms to alleviate the pressure and tension. A problem associated with having a depressed partner is that, for a variety of reasons, one can become isolated and disconnected from other relationships. The domestic situation can become the equivalent of an emotional prison. Living with a depressed spouse means living an ambivalent life, experiencing conflicting emotions of affection and disgust, empathy and irritation, and the feelings of responsibility alongside betrayal keep the supportive partner in a state of uncertainty, a paralysing condition that counteracts the ability to change. Judith Herman discusses the notion of captivity, comparing prisoners-of-war and with victims of domestic abuse, and describing why some manage to survive with their autonomy intact. Herman (1992:80-81) says that:

As tenaciously as their captors seek to destroy their relationships, these prisoners tenaciously seek to maintain communication with a world outside the one in which they are confined. They deliberately practice evoking mental images of the people they love, in order to preserve their sense of connection...to preserve physical tokens of fidelity...a wedding ring, a letter, a photograph, or some other token of attachment...under conditions of prolonged isolation, prisoners need “transitional objects” to preserve their sense of connection. They understand that to lose these symbols of attachment is to lose themselves.

Although working as a visual artist, my first creative impulse has always been writing. As a child I had a warm relationship with my maternal grandmother, a calm and capable woman, who kept a daily journal for over thirty years. The family assumed her writing was the description of trivial domestic events or family matters. On her death, my two aunts opened her journals and began to read. They were so appalled at the contents, that they burned them all, an extreme act of destruction for two normally placid women. They would never reveal the contents. I was heartened by this family tale and my own tentative writing became more prolific and revealing – although as secret to my family as my grandmother’s was to hers. I



keep my most recent writings in a small zipped compartment of my handbag, and reread them when alone, even over cappuccino in a coffee shop. This act serves to connect me to my grandmother, yet at the same time bears witness to my actual experience, as self-doubt is a constant companion during the better times. The rereading of my own writings has become a small soothing ritual.

In discussion of fostering creative expression in any authentic form, Penny Siopis quotes Nise Malange as saying: "...each person has a story to tell...". Siopis continues: "how they tell it, is surely up to them" (1990:51). When my husband became depressed in the early 1990s, writing allowed me a way of maintaining emotional equilibrium. Some writing is a response to inflicted emotional pain. The work is not intended as a feminist statement, for example to highlight the plight of women in abusive relationships, as depression is not gender-specific and there are many men trying to support depressed wives. However, the state of cohabitation with a depressed spouse tends to highlight and stereotype gender-related situations and responses.

I have nurtured a core of black humour that has helped to explore the ironic and subversive behaviour of the supportive spouse, and some writing, in particular the series 'a contemporary marriage (sad but true)', including the titles, reflects this. My husband is of Greek extract, and the notion of tragi-comic is never far from the surface of our interactions. After the initial shocking onset of the illness, during times of 'normality', we are able to appreciate certain areas of humour within our situation. Michael Miller describes the "thin partitions [that] sometimes divide the tragic from the absurd" (1995:217). He maintains "good psychotherapy ... is by definition ironical. Like art (though art is not made with this intention), its interpretive and exploratory ironies can help people accept limitation, imperfection, complexity, and the points of view of others. In irony begins empathy after a fall" (Miller 1995:217).

A starting point in this attempted healing process was the decision to embroider strip bandages with the monologue 'a contemporary marriage (sad but true)', which is a transcription of my husband's actual recorded ranting. Although in reality it is drawn from scraps of conversation occurring over an extensive period of time, I have chosen to follow it through as a typical twenty-four hour period. It attempts to demonstrate that interaction is impossible, and merely sparks off more antagonism.

My choice of handmade bandages and embroidery has significance, bandages being related to both healing and covering up. Despite years of women fighting for the negation of gender



stereotyping, the female role in a family unit is still considered to be predominately that of comforter and healer. This is a social construct reinforced by advertising and the popular media. In addition, admitting to psychological illness is largely a shameful experience for most families, which tends to force the family into isolation and delay dealing with the situation in a less exhausting and more constructive manner.

Unlike art therapy, a discipline of confidentiality designed in part to give mental health professionals insight into their patients' blocked or suppressed memories, the link between conscious art making and healing relates to renewed connections: art demands a legitimate and sensitive response from someone other than its maker; and healing of trauma can only occur within the context of relationships. A survivor of trauma, argues Herman must "re-create the psychological faculties that were damaged ... [which] include the basic capacities for trust, autonomy, initiative, competence, identity and intimacy" (1992:133). The work of an artist of integrity should contain most of these characteristics and the act of making art relating to traumatic personal experience can initiate a healing process.

The act of tearing up a large sheet of soft white calico into bandage strips made me wonder how many times, over the years, women have had to tear up sheets, petticoats and other carefully made and cared-for garments, in emergency situations. When depression suddenly and often inexplicably descends on a marriage, the lovingly constructed and tended centre of that most private of emotional retreats is laid waste. The washing and ironing of the bandage strips in preparation for embroidery, a mundane task, proved soothing, a remembrance that reconstruction may be possible.

Embroidery obviously has strong links with the fundamental feminist artists of the 1970s, such as Judy Chicago and Miriam Schapiro, who exploited this craft, amongst other media, in a critical stance against the traditional (male-dominated) disciplines of painting and sculpture. My use of embroidery springs from other imperatives, similar to those of South African artist, Bridget Baker, who discusses her use of knitting and embroidery (Kellner 1999:140-142):

Domestic occupations like sewing and knitting are historically the terrains of the virtuous woman ... at art school I experimented with traditional "fine art" techniques, but remained drawn to approaches like hand-embroidery. This is a time-consuming process and the repetitive nature of the work allows me to contemplate and work through issues I am dealing with.

Hand-embroidered words suit my love of working with fabric, a sensual medium, and the inherently visually decorative quality of text. Although embroidery work is often described as



‘mindless activity’, it is in fact a mind-freeing activity, related to a meditative state. It is a time-limited activity but is sanctioned: the outward appearance of industry allows the undisturbed exploration of secret thoughts. Often one’s thoughts return again and again to the same subjects, and these thought processes become personal mantras, to calm and soothe. In this way, the act of embroidery may resemble a state of mysticism and take on a personal spiritual quality. As one’s hands work to a pre-ordered design, using pre-decided colours, so is one’s mind free to travel. Judith Herman maintains: “people in captivity become adept practitioners of the arts of altered consciousness. Through the practice of disassociation, voluntary thought suppression, minimisation, and sometimes outright denial, they learn to alter an unbearable reality.” (1992:87).

Another area of interest has been the clichés handed out by well-meaning relatives and friends as snippets of advice, or sentimental sayings in readily available little books of daily quotations for women. The usual ineffectiveness of any homely advice when dealing with overwhelming depression parallels the similar ineffectiveness of the domestic first aid box. An appropriate example of the above is this phrase from J. Donald Walters’ *Secrets for Women* (1993:61): ‘when people hurt you, heal their sickness of disharmony by kindness understanding and forgiveness’. The Introduction to this little book offers the following instructions:

A seed thought is offered for every day ... repeat the saying several times: first out loud, then softly, then in a whisper, and then only mentally. With each repetition, allow the words to become absorbed ever more deeply into your subconscious. Thus, gradually, you will acquire a complete understanding of each day’s thought. At this point, indeed, the truths set forth here will have become your own ... before you go to bed, repeat the thought several times more. While falling asleep, carry the words into your subconscious, absorbing their positive influence into your whole being. Let it become thereby an integral part of your normal consciousness.

These instructions are a form of the kind of gentle but not so subtle propaganda that reinforces women’s role as caretaker. The woman is supposed to recite the phrase as a meditative mantra, whether it bears relevance on her circumstances or not. However, this kind of advice may serve to underscore the sense of guilt and inadequacy in the supportive spouse. In combining these ‘truisms’ with my own writing I attempt to endorse a sense of futility. These writings are transcribed in Appendix V.

*A state of readiness* is divided into three sub-sections, relating to three bandage types: the roller bandage, the triangular bandage and the extremity (finger or toe) bandage. The eleven roller bandages are embroidered with the discussed monologue, the seven triangular bandages



with writings describing my response to or description of events, and the five extremity bandages with five verses of a poem describing more positive aspects of my marital relationship.

My scrolls and books are also informed by the discovery of two popular domestic first aid publications, *Manual of First Aid* (1954) and *Vitalogy* (1927). Finding the first aid guide book, *Manual of First Aid*, I was attracted by the naïve diagrammatic quality of the line drawings, instructing the application of bandages, which seemed to refer back to a simpler era, when family difficulties were not discussed. (Of course, that did not mean that they did not exist.) On discovering *Vitalogy*, describing first aid, afflictions and household remedies, I was amazed at the factually incorrect information on which housewives of that time based the running of their homes and caring for their families and the authority with which the author expounded this. An additional area of interest with *Vitalogy*, was the strong moral overtone of the book, guaranteed to induce a sense of inadequacy and guilt in any woman whose family showed any aberration from the described “norm”.

Using these two books, which seemed to be the medical equivalent of the *Secrets for Women* type of book, I decided to make my own instruction manuals for bandage application. Using a combination of screenprint and embroidery, 16 books were manufactured to function in association with the different bandage type.

In keeping with the common tendency to cover-up psychological problems in the family, I decided to use the slogan of Bandaid or Elastoplast advertisements: kiss it better with a bandaid strip. I created a screen exposed with a mantra of kiss it better, combined with other soothing words such as one would murmur to an injured child. Responses become automatic to the repetitive nature of emotional crises and the mantra becomes a form of expected comfort for the ill person, as well as an easy, if not effective, response.

The mantra forms a background on the scrolls and all the pages of the books, superimposed with the screenprinted diagrams of bandaging techniques or ailments, copied from the two manuals. In the books, my own words are hand-written alongside the diagrams, alluding to the manner in which housewives often jot down notes in this kind of manual or even cookery books.

Throughout the project, I have maintained a monochromatic approach: the kiss it better mantra is printed in the neutral artificial tone of a Bandaid, which mimics the self-effacing nature of the supportive spouse, and also alludes in part to the manner in which depression



may bleach a relationship of its richness and colour. The diagrams remain black and different shades of red are used for the writing and embroidery. The white bandages, scrolls and book pages, the mantra and neat careful diagrams have a pristine quality, but the red text acts as the shock of blood - a stain or seepage ruining the attempts at cleanliness, neatness or self-control.

The rolled bandage books refer to the chart-scrolls. When unrolled, the scroll becomes an object of contemplation, each containing the kiss it better mantra with a simple bandaging instruction diagram. The bandage books are rolled and fastened and placed in the first aid kit. The method of fastening, using safety pins or bandage clips, pierces the softness of the fabric, causing repeated microscopic damage over time, a metaphor for the damage done to the spouse's psyche by the wounding words of the ill partner.

Although these books function primarily as simulated manuals, the book as object demands an intimate form of engagement. The one-on-one interaction with a book serves to underline the secrecy of its contents. These books are of a delicate nature, in that the paper of the pages is flimsy, and the covers are made from stitched gauze and thin disposable wipes. This forces the interaction to be slow and careful, as the viewer would not wish to damage the book, and enhances the sense of the contents exploring a fragile situation, alluding again to the privacy demanded by journal writing.

The artists' book as an artform is unique in the requirements it places on the empathetic viewer. The book object demands physical contact and thus adds the factor of time as an imposed condition of viewing. In addition, the actual fabric or material of the book object becomes significant, as the sense of touch comes into play. There is an inherent 'preciousness' to books, as traditionally they are considered containers of knowledge, fact or intellectual property. The artists book demands a less hypothetical response and a more sensual intuitive reaction, which often subverts expectations.

In conclusion, this body of work is an acknowledgement of the subtle psychological damage inflicted by depression. However, over the years I have realised that depression can also become both a comfort zone and a useful tool for controlling one's family. Despite the challenge, my artwork has not healed my husband. However, its manufacture caused me to become bored with my own *angst*, and consequently, in part, the works have healed me. Paradoxically, the lightening of my own responses has served to lighten my husband's mood. The reactions of empathy that this body of work elicited has shown me that a significant social statement may be made by an artist digging deeply into his or her own condition.



Although this body of work speaks of a distressing state that has afflicted my family, I have attempted undertones of humour, using irony and tapping into our ability to laugh at absurdity. The work has been created while experiencing the disparate emotions of irritation, frustration and despair yet retaining feelings of sympathy and affection for my husband. Once the shock of the initial depressive episode has eased, one eventually settles into new patterns. This body of work considers the significance of the coping strategies of the spouse of a depressive person. These include the value of maintaining a sense of identity and clarity through creative self-expression, which helps to preserve important personal connections. In addition, the importance of bearing valid witness to the experience cannot be undervalued. These aspects form part of a healing process in which contemplation plays a large role. Finally, Michael Miller, in attempting to bring a perspective of balance into tormented marital relationships, discusses the role of irony, saying (1995:217):

Domesticity ought [not] to be a slapstick stand-up routine – but bringing the comic to bear when one's take on life has become overly heavy and tragic is a large part of what I mean by ironical. Another part is opening oneself to the negative aspects of a situation without losing contact with the positive ones. And of all institutions, marriage, heaven knows, can use a large dose of irony.



## APPENDIX V: WRITINGS RELATED TO THE CANDIDATE'S PRACTICAL WORK.

seven writings related to the triangular bandages

my husband lifemate is gentle and vicious  
kind with a lacerating tongue  
slicing me into shreds  
(for my own good)  
generously withholding  
caring and callous  
crushingly affectionate  
clingingly remote

\*\*\*\*\*

he comes home irritable,  
muttering about the dog-hair on the couch,  
complaining that he can't read the newspaper  
in the lamplight,  
flicking off the radio,  
switching on the television sports channel,  
she lays the table,  
says, come, sit, I made soup,  
bought your favourite rolls, here's some nice wine,  
he says,  
you're doing too much again,  
you'll exhaust yourself,  
you're always tired  
she says  
someone has to shop and prepare supper  
he says  
I want flowers not fruit

\*\*\*\*\*



the slightest hint of bad mood on his part,  
a small frown indicating displeasure,  
an irritable comment,  
and, irrationally, my day is ruined,  
tears prick at the backs of my eyes,  
my stomach knots,  
and I panic,  
compromise whatever it is I'd planned to do,  
in a desperate attempt to pacify,  
to ward off another tantrum.

\*\*\*\*\*

with the cruel casual words  
that offer you merely the temporary release of sarcasm,  
you strike a knife clean into my soul  
carving away  
until you have created your dream  
not mine

\*\*\*\*\*

eventually  
an open wound will close  
leaving behind a fissure of weakness  
protected by a thick weal of pink knitted flesh  
but this is not healing  
the scar tissue will never return to its former wholesome state  
will remain a site of potential fragility  
of latent eruption  
at times of vulnerability  
at the time that you can least cope

\*\*\*\*\*



a short afternoon sleep  
and I awake disorientated  
momentarily uncertain  
as to ... place? ...hour?  
even ... who am I?  
blinking away confusion  
breathing in sharp recognition:  
the ache is still there

\*\*\*\*\*

why do women everywhere  
lock themselves in their bathrooms to grieve  
while pretending to their husbands and children  
that they are merely indulging  
in a bubble bath

\*\*\*\*\*

five verses related to the extremity bandages

after fifteen years of marriage...  
 my husband  
 sits up late on a winter's night  
 polishing my boots  
 allowing me time to read the newspaper

after fifteen years of marriage...  
 my husband  
 takes my car to work  
 where it will be washed and vacuumed  
 to save me the time spent at the garage valet service

after fifteen years of marriage...  
 my husband  
 lets me sleep in on Sundays  
 while he gets up to feed our dogs  
 (sometimes I do the same for him)

after fifteen years of marriage...  
 my husband  
 takes me to a movie and then to supper  
 every Friday evening  
 so we have time to talk

after fifteen years of marriage...  
 my husband  
 and I often remind each other  
 how passion can turn to compassion  
 if you're lucky



writings related to the roller bandages and *never let the sun go down I book*

a tale of contemporary marriage (sad but true)

sweet talk

how about a cup of coffee that would be great no there's not enough sugar just put a bit more in oh you didn't stir it that's the problem okay what's for supper oh no not steak again do you think I'm made of money are you trying to kill me with cholesterol we never eat fish we must eat more fish and white meat how can I enjoy this steak when I know I've paid R58 a kilo for it you must learn to shop more economically I can't enjoy a steak which cost R58 a kilo

man's best friend

let's have a quiet evening together in front of the T.V. oh no look at the dust on the T.V. screen this place is filthy just look at these dog-hairs my trousers are covered you'll have to brush them for me in the morning well he's your dog you let him sit on the couch you can just brush them and press them in the morning it costs a fortune to keep going to the dry-cleaners an absolute fortune

sit here beside me my love

yes the steak was very nice just a little bit tough I suppose you bought it in Woolworths yes I know they're convenient but they're so bloody expensive just leave those dishes now and come and watch T.V. with me yes I'll help you clear up later though I don't see why I should really what do I pay the maid for not so I have to come home and start cleaning the table why don't you get her to come in for half an hour every evening yes I know you like your privacy I know its not a lot of work but what's the point of exhausting yourself every

night when I pay a maid just you leave those dishes now leave them

shared interests

lets see that book what are you reading now oh a paperback  
what a waste of money why on earth don't you get books  
from the library what do you mean you don't have time to go  
you can make time if you organise yourself if you've got time  
to go shopping you've certainly got time to go to the library  
you just need to organise your day better time management  
just pass that book to me what's it about I'll give it back just  
now

a relaxing bath

what are you doing come on it's getting late let's go to bed  
you're always so tired you exhaust yourself we must start  
getting to bed earlier what are you doing in that bathroom  
why do you let the water run when you brush your teeth don't  
you know there are water restrictions come on hurry up oh  
before you get into bed won't you refill my water glass I'm so  
thirsty it must have been that steak thanks no don't turn off  
the light yet I'm not going to sleep yet I want to read a bit  
more of that book

a rosy dawn

what's the time oh god why do you have to get up so early  
what you have to wash your hair why do you wash it every  
second day you really overwash it why can't you wash it at  
night so we can sleep in a bit longer well once you're up I'm  
awake aren't I how can I sleep while you're showering with  
the radio on in the bathroom how can I sleep while you're  
blow-drying your hair



## breakfast together

oh I see you're drinking your tea yes it is a lovely day is the milk warm for my meusli where is it oh in the microwave okay come on I have to leave in five minutes won't you bring me the rusks no I don't want so much grapefruit juice just half a glass won't you put some fruit in a packet for me to take to work I must start eating more fruit you never buy fruit any more lets have more fruit in fact you should make a nice fresh fruit salad tonight don't forget I've got the afternoon off I'll be home at 1.30 you can make a nice tuna salad for lunch

## the lovers' parting

OK I'll see you at 1.30 then make sure you pick up that registered article from the post office today the slips been here for three days already and while you're there just pop into the bank and make sure that deposit has been made what do you mean you can't yes I know there are queues on a Friday but its important you must learn to prioritise your life oh you're meeting your mother for coffee well let me tell you our financial status is one helluva lot more important than meeting your mother for coffee I suppose you'll go shopping together too I suppose you're both depressed again whenever you women are depressed you go shopping well spending doesn't cure depression you know oh so you're going to work afterwards for a few hours anyway I must go or I'll be late where are my car keys won't you help me find them

## together again at last

hello is lunch ready good what are you doing oh cleaning out the fridge what are you throwing away are you throwing food away for gods sake what's wrong with you you must be completely mad don't you know there are people starving to death in this town all over Africa people are starving and you're throwing food away what do you mean you don't

know any starving people no I don't know any either but it's the principle why did you throw out that tomato there's nothing wrong with it well just cut that bit off oh god did you buy that pre-washed lettuce from Woolworths why don't you get a lettuce from the greengrocers and wash it yourself Woolworths are such a rip-off they're so bloody expensive yes I know they're convenient come on sit down lets have a nice lunch leave that now sit down and have lunch

a sympathetic ear

oh dear what a shame so you had a difficult morning at work you poor thing well that boss of yours is such an asshole really he is just tell him its not your job to do that you take too much on yourself really you don't need to kill yourself for him who is he in your life no one yes I know its an important job but really what do you care its his problem its his business if he doesn't care about his own business why should you you're too conscientious you really are you work too hard for him if I asked you to do half of what he asks you to do you'd tell me to get lost

fate tears us apart

well that was a nice lunch I must say shall I make a coffee where are the cups oh god still in the dishwasher you must speak to the maid she's really getting slack you must check on her I know you're often at work but you must give her specific chores and then check whether she's done them properly where's the coffee where's the sugar I'm going to my therapist this afternoon oh didn't I tell you well you can go and do that stuff at the bank and post office since you couldn't this morning too busy having coffee with your mother no I'm not going to do it I don't have an afternoon off to spend it at the shops doing chores come on its not that far out of your way I'll see you at home at 5 and we'll have coffee together before you start supper



secrets for women: the seven days of the week

day one:

when people hurt you, heal their sickness of disharmony by kindness, understanding and forgiveness

day two:

be to everyone, in a sense, a mother. Give to others unconditionally; expect nothing in return. By doing so, you will receive from Life a thousandfold

day three:

act more; react less - emotional reaction only clouds reality. Let your love for others be like a compass needle, which, no matter how often it is deflected, returns to the true North

day four:

the greatest of all healers is Love - let your feelings be guided by wisdom, and your emotions by selfless love

day five:

transcend your personal troubles by offering solace to other troubled hearts

day six:

true beauty is a radiance outward from within - it comes from kind, happy thoughts, and from virtuous qualities

day seven:

give of yourself impersonally, rather than thinking in terms of what others are giving you

## ILLUSTRATIONS



Fig 1. Guiseppe Cattaneo, *The Gable* (1986). Screenprint, 42 x 64 cm.  
(Source: original artwork).



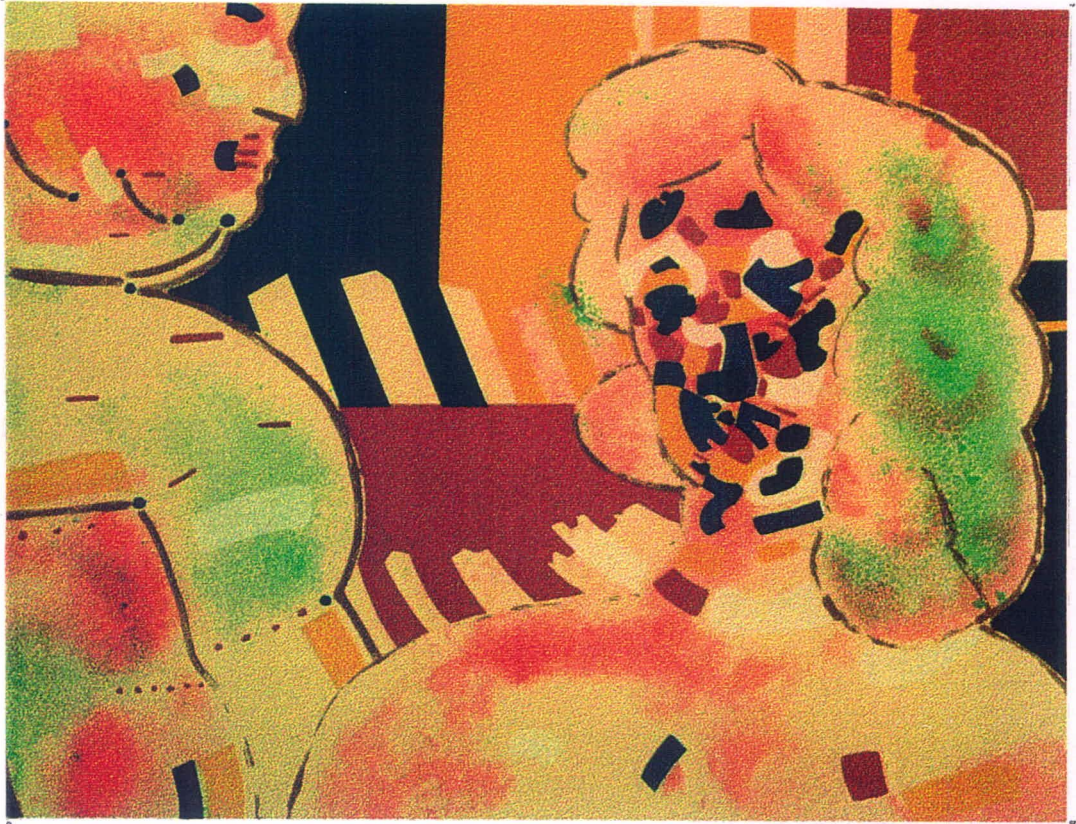


Fig 2. Robert Hodgins, *Encounter* (1986). Screenprint, 39 x 53,5 cm.  
(Source: original artwork).



Fig 3. Ezrom Legae, *Quarter to Twelve to Implosion* (1986). Screenprint, 55 x 38 cm.  
(Source: original artwork).





Fig 4. Marion Arnold, *Incident* (1991). Screenprint, 59,8 x 85,2 cm.  
(Source: original artwork).





Fig 5. Gavin Young, *Flight* (1991). Screenprint, 83,2 x 56,5 cm.  
(Source: original artwork).





Fig 6. Feé Halstead Berning, *The Arrival* (1991). Screenprint, 61,5 x 49,5 cm.  
(Source: original artwork).





Fig 7. Bonnie Ntshalintshali, *Jonah* (1991). Screenprint, 80 x 62,3 cm.  
(Source: *Decade of Young Artists* catalogue 1991: 11).



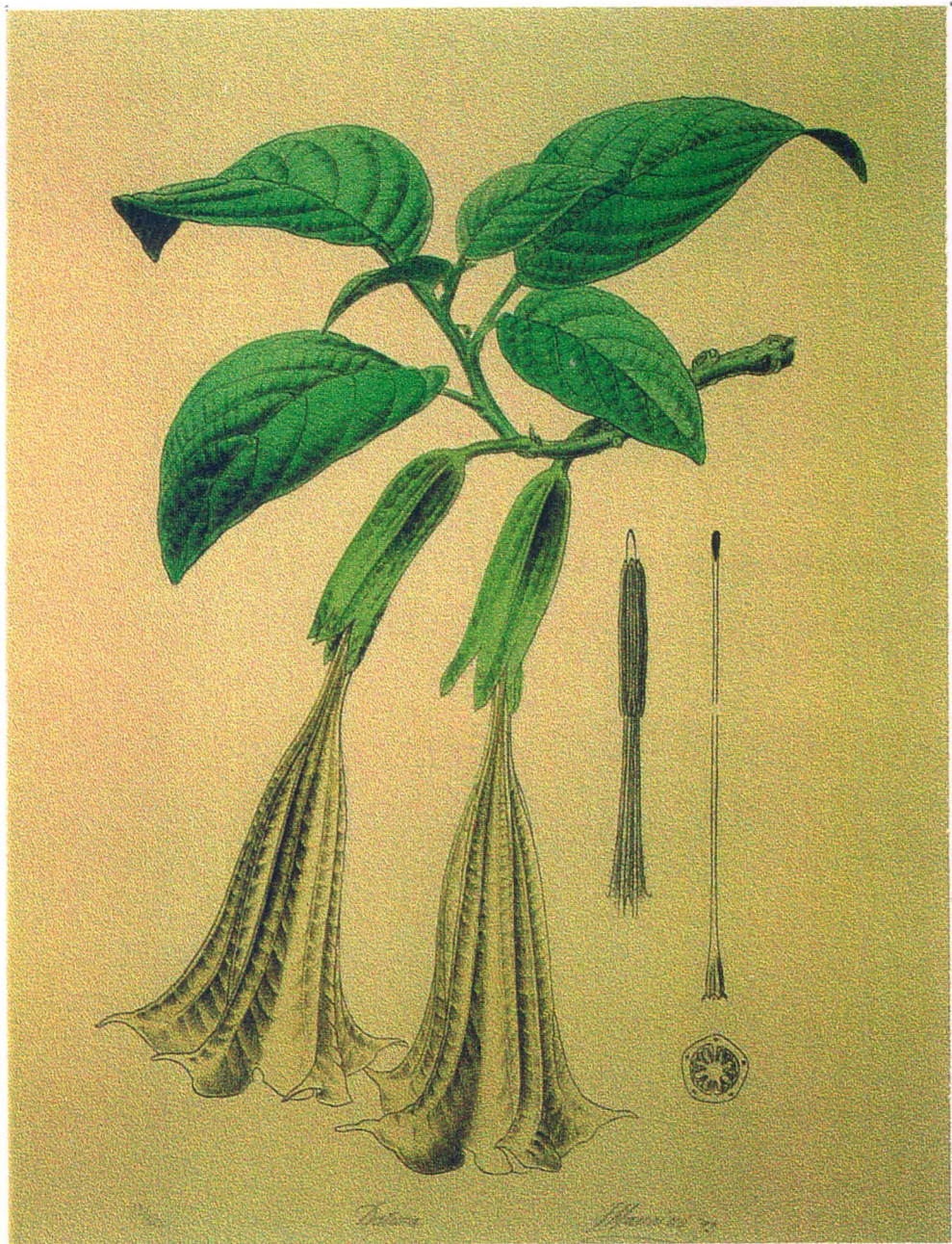


Fig 8. John Manning, *Datura* (1992). Handcoloured lithograph, 35,5 x 26 cm.  
(Source: original artwork).





Fig 9. John Manning, *Gloriosa superba* (1992). Screenprint, 28 x 20,5 cm.  
(Source: original artwork).





Fig 10. Karel Nel, *Boat of the Oblivious Bloom* (1992). Stone lithograph, 25 x 20 cm.  
(Source: original artwork).





Fig 11. V. D. (Derek) Nxumalo, *Manor Garden* (1992). Screenprint, 26,5 x 20,5 cm.  
(Source: original artwork).





Fig 12. Edith Bukani, *Strict Parents* (1995). Screenprint, 26 x 40 cm.

(Source: original artwork).





Fig 13. Wonderboy Nxumalo, *Making Fire Without Matches* (1995). Screenprint, circular format diameter of 42,5 cm.

(Source: original artwork)



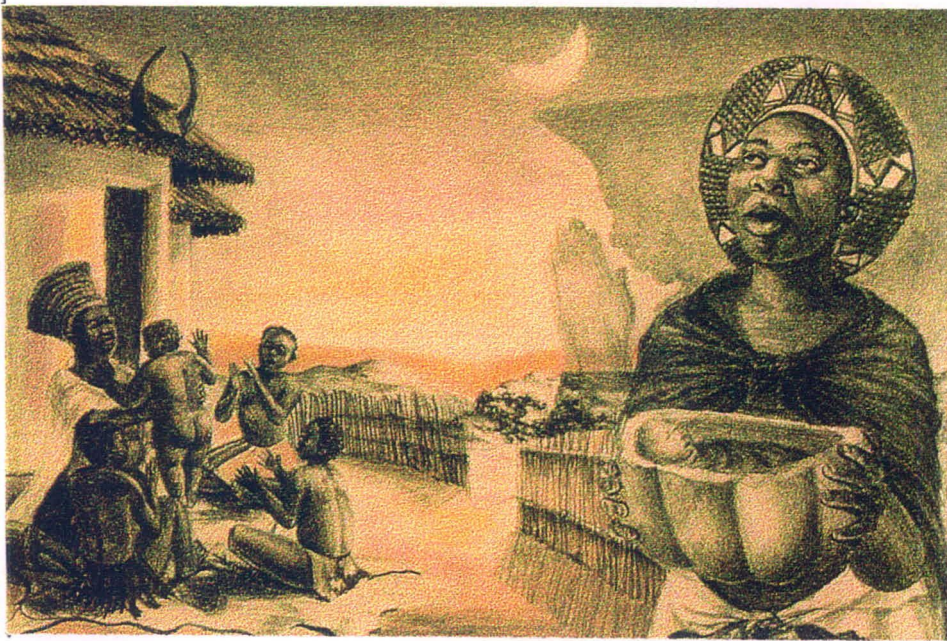


Fig 14. Sthembiso Sibisi, *Precious Gift* (1994). Screenprint and lithograph, 29 x 42 cm.  
(Source: original artwork).



Fig 15. Mmagabo Helen Sebidi, *Lebelo, Le a jelwa* (1994). Screenprint, 43 x 70 cm.  
(Source: original artwork).





Fig 16. Deborah Bell, *Salutations* (1997). Etching, drypoint and chin collé, 49,5 x 34 cm.  
(Source: original artwork).



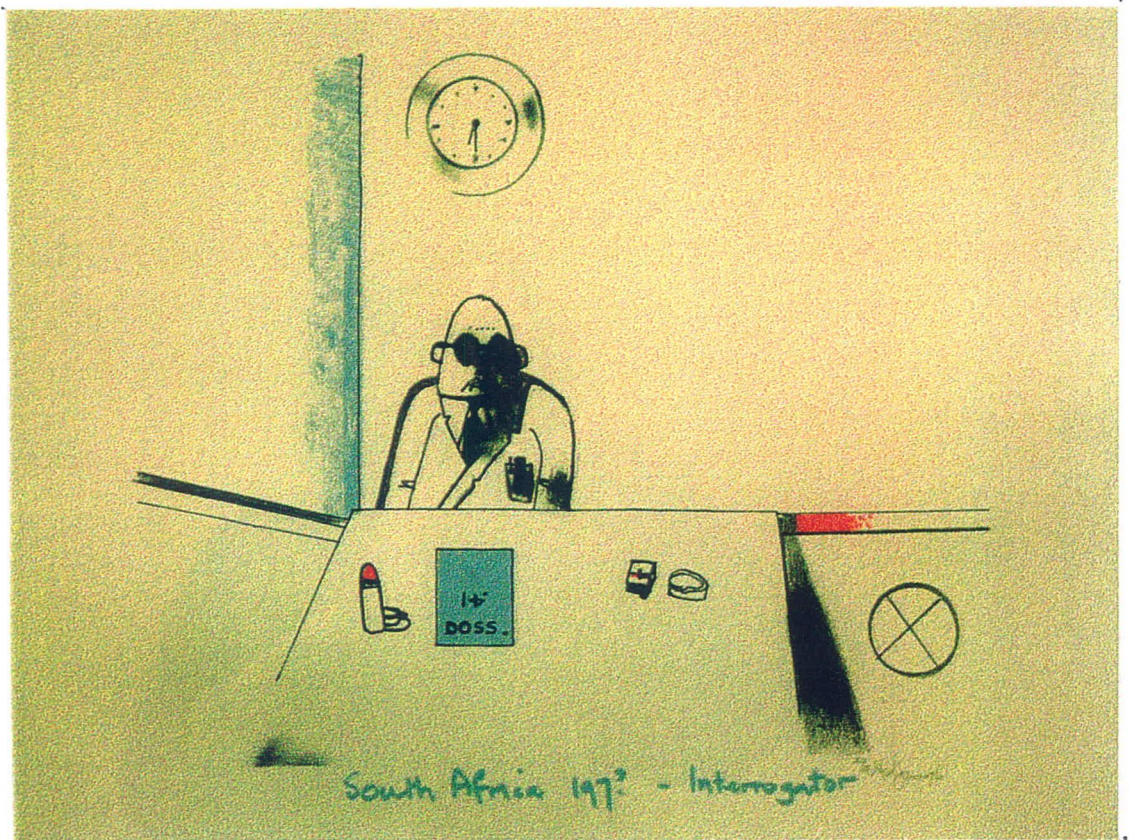


Fig 17. Robert Hodgins, *South Africa 197? – Interrogator* (1996). Screenprint, 26 x 30 cm.  
(Source: original artwork).



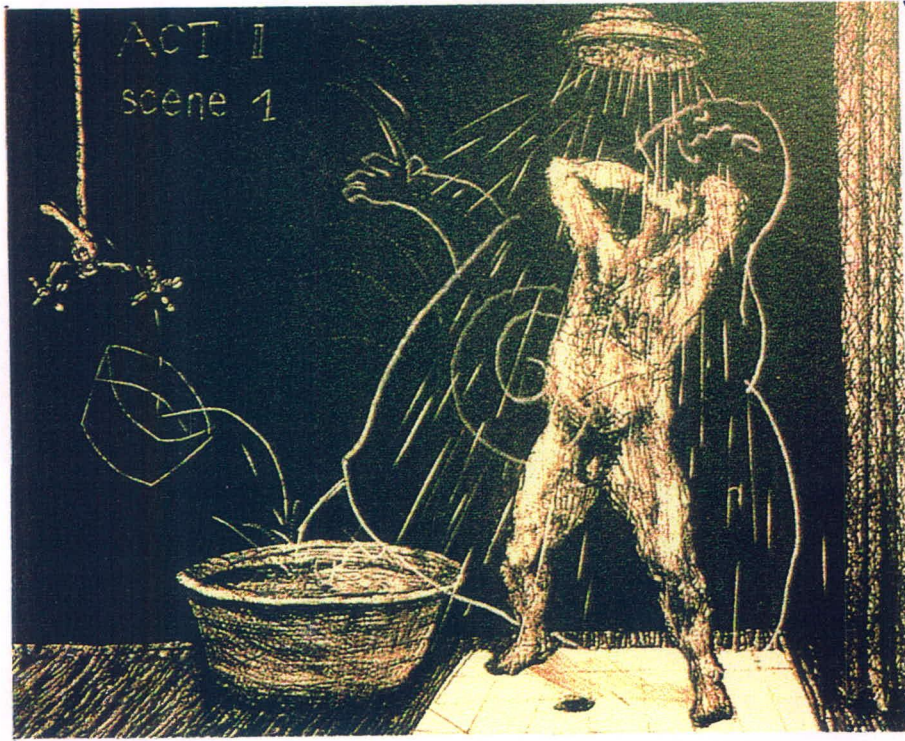


Fig 18. William Kentridge, *Act II Scene 1* (1996-97). Etching, drypoint and engraving (2 plates), 25 x 30 cm.  
(Source: Cameron, D. et al 1999: 32).



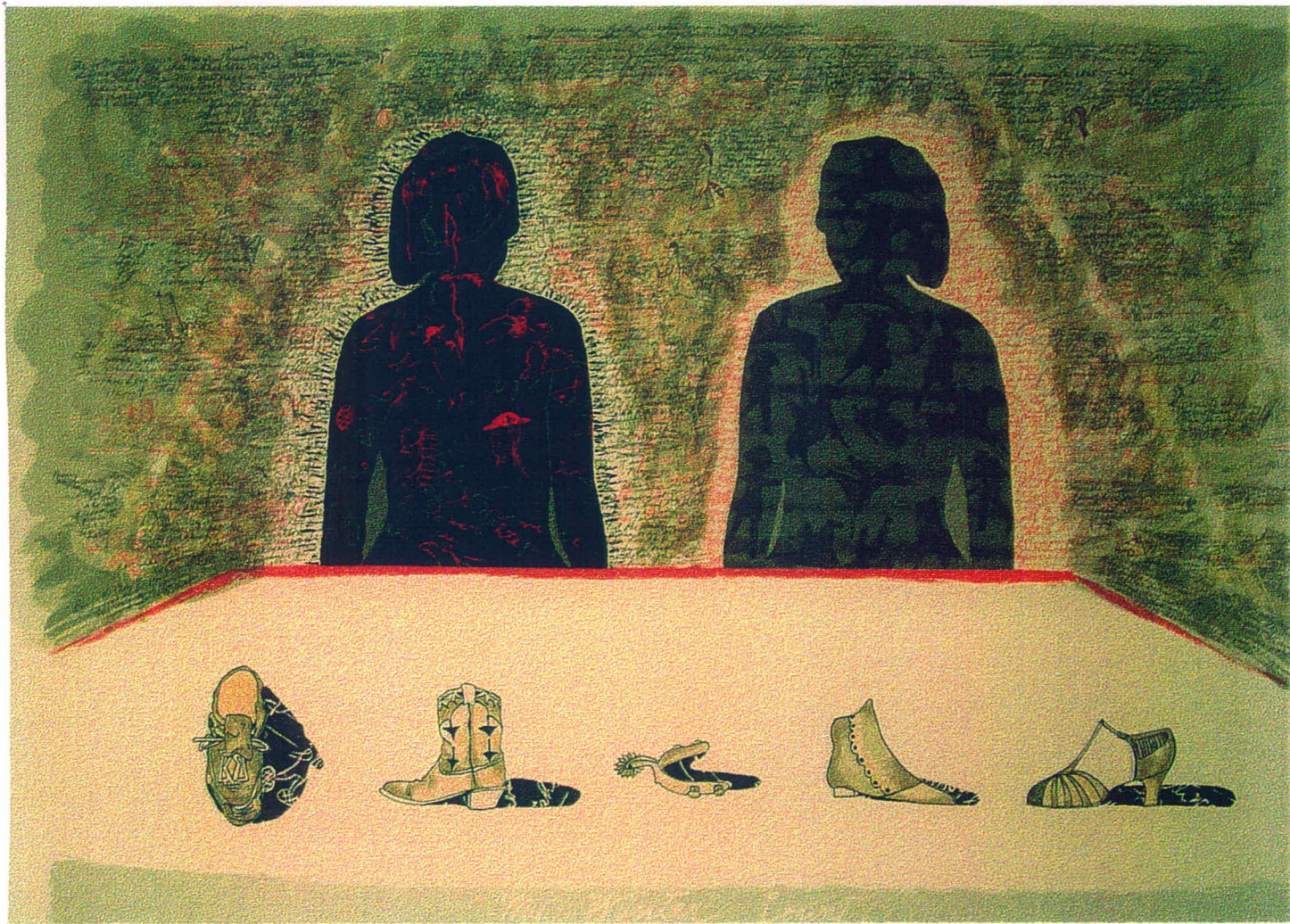


Fig 19. Lynne Allen, *My Winter Count* (1999). Screenprint lithograph linocut and chin collé, 67 x 97 cm.  
(Source: original artwork).



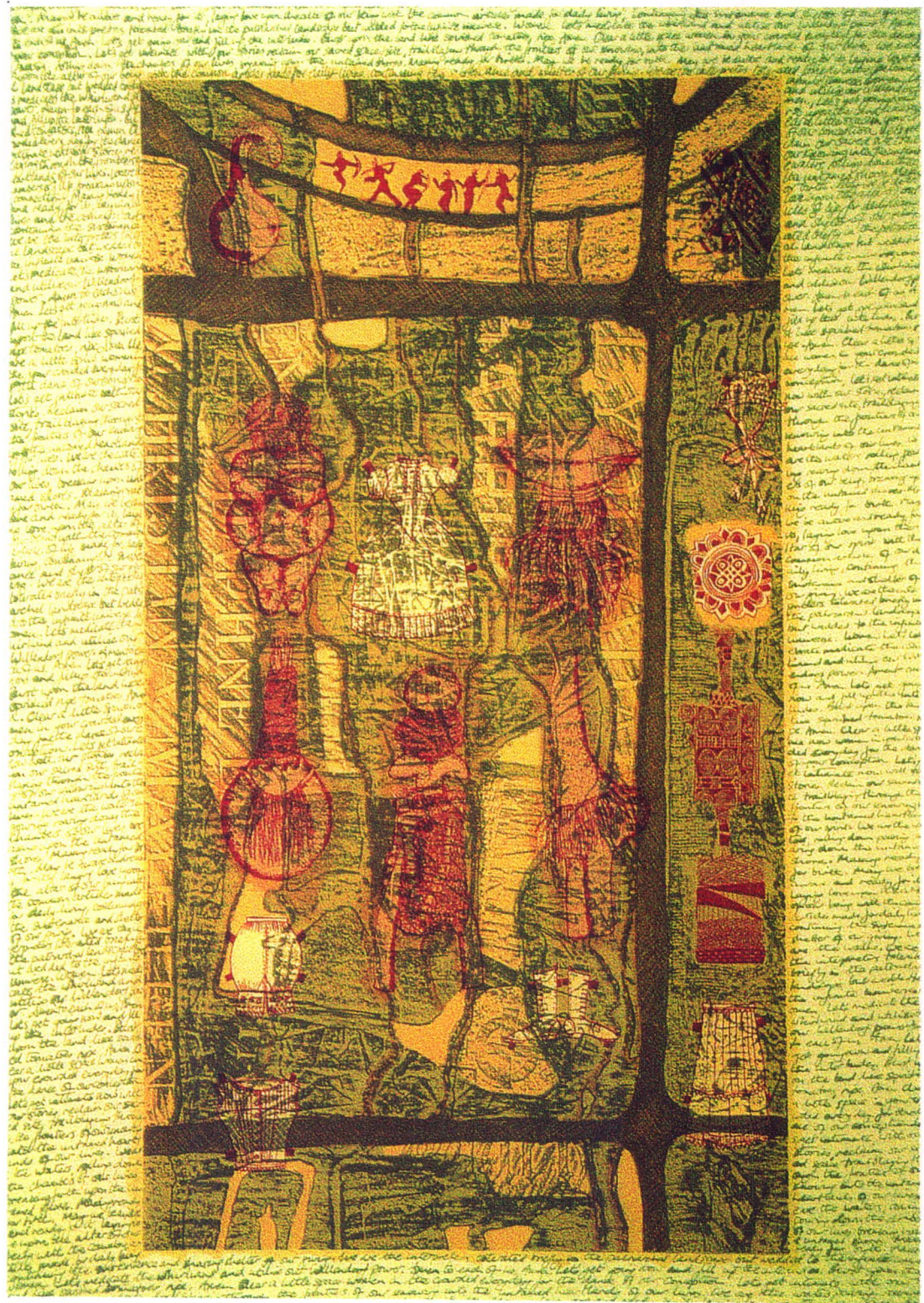


Fig 20. Sheila Flynn, *Bone-Doings and Memories* (1999). Screenprint, 84 x 54 cm.  
(Source: original artwork).





Fig 21. Patricia Hurl, *Tireanna* (1999). Screenprint, 82 x 61 cm.  
(Source: original artwork).



## LIST OF SOURCES

*Africus: Johannesburg Biennale*. Johannesburg: Transitional Metropolitan Council. (Catalogue for Johannesburg Biennale 28 February–30 April 1995.)

Alexander, L. & Cohen, E. 1990. *150 South African Paintings: Past and Present*. Cape Town: Struikhof Publishers.

Atkins, R. 1990. *Artspeak*. New York: Abbeville Press.

Atkinson, B. 1998. Corporate funding.(corporate art collections). *De Arte* 58, September: 41-43.

Atkinson, B. & Breitz, C. (eds) 1999. *Grey Areas: Representation, Identity and Politics in Contemporary South African Art*. Johannesburg: Chalkham Hill Press.

Arnold, M. 1992. *Art Meets Science: Flowers As Images*. (Catalogue for exhibition held at the 1820 Settlers Museum, Grahamstown, Standard Bank National Festival of the Arts, 1992.)

Arnold, M. 1996. *Women and Art in South Africa*. Cape Town: David Phillip Publishers.

Arnold, M. 1999. Recrimination and imagination, in *Grey Areas: Representation, Identity and Politics in Contemporary South African Art* edited by B Atkinson and C Breitz. Johannesburg: Chalkham Hill Press: 37-39.

Bedford, E. (ed.) 1997. *Contemporary South African Art 1985-1995: from the South African National Gallery Permanent Collection*. Cape Town: South African National Gallery. (Catalogue for exhibition 14 December 1996-31 March 1997.)

Berman, E. 1983. *Art and Artists of South Africa*. Cape Town: A. A. Balkema.

Berman, E. 1993. *Painting in South Africa*. Halfway House: Southern Book Publishers.



Bonner, F. Goodman, L. Allen, R. Janes, L. & King, C. (eds) 1992. *Imagining Women: Cultural Representations and Gender*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Brandt, R. B. 1975. The morality and rationality of suicide, in *A Handbook for the Study of Suicide* edited by Perlin, S. Oxford: Oxford University Press: 61-76.

Brown, K. 1996. *Ink, Paper, Metal, Wood*. San Francisco: Chronicle Books.

Burger, L. 1998. The Gates Of Paradise (corporate art collections). *De Arte* 58, September: 40-41.

Cameron, D, Christov-Bakargiev, C, & Coetzee, JM. 1999. *William Kentridge*. London: Phaidon Press.

Campschreur, W. & Divendal, J. (eds.) 1989. *Culture in Another South Africa*. London: Zed Books Ltd.

Comerford, J. 1999. *Original Limited Edition Prints by Hard Ground Printmakers 1989-1999*. Cape Town: Hard Ground Printmakers Publications. (Catalogue for the exhibition *A Decade of Hard Ground Printmaking 1989-1999* Sanlam Gallery, Bellville, Cape, November 1999.)

Conidaris, M. 1999. Sthembiso Sibisi: a visual storyteller. *Printmaking Today*, September: 10-11.

Cruise, W. 1998. In conversation with Neil Dundas.(corporate art collections). *De Arte* 58, September: 36-38.

D'Amato, M. 1999. Beyond the trauma: the transition of the resistance aesthetic in contemporary South African art, in *Liberated Voices* edited by F. Herreman. New York: Museum for African Art: 43-52.

Davenport, R. & Saunders, C. 2000. (5<sup>th</sup> edition). *South Africa: A Modern History*. London: Macmillan Press.

De Jager, E.J. 1992. *Images of Man: Contemporary South African Black Art and Artists*. Alice, Ciskei: Fort Hare University Press.



Enwezor, O. 1997. Neglected artform or poor relation: the importance of printmaking in Africa, in *Contemporary South African Art: The Gencor Collection*, edited by K. Geers. Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball Publishers: 65-80.

Fromm, E. 1994. *The Art of Listening*. New York: Continuum.

Gablik, S. 1995. *Conversations before the end of time*. London: Thames and Hudson.

Geers, K. (ed.) 1997. *The Gencor Collection*. Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball Publishers Ltd.

Hansen, TV, Mickenberg, D, Moser, J & Walker, B 1995. *Printmaking in America: Collaborative Prints and Presses 1960-1990*. New York: Harry N. Abrams.

Herman, J. L. 1992.

*Trauma and Recovery: From Domestic Abuse to Political Terror*. London: Pandora.

Herreman, F. (ed.) 1999. *Liberated Voices: Contemporary Art from South Africa*. New York: Museum for African Art.

Hodgins, R. & Powell, I. 1996. *Robert Hodgins*. Johannesburg: Robert Hodgins.

Hobbs, P. & Rankin, E. 1997. *Printmaking in a Transforming South Africa*. Cape Town: David Phillip.

Hobbs, P. 1998. Processing heritage: putting prints into corporate collections (corporate art collections). *De Arte* 58, September: 38-40.

Hollis, J. 1993.

*The Middle Passage: From Misery to Meaning in Midlife*. Toronto: Inner City Books.

Isaak, J. A. 1996. *Feminism and Contemporary Art: The Revolutionary Power of Women's Laughter*. London: Routledge.



Johnson, R. A. & Ruhl, J. M. 1999. *Contentment: A Way to true Happiness*. New York: Harpur Collins.

Katzenstein, M. 1982. *The Multiple Image: A Guide to Collecting Original Prints*. New York: Original Print Collectors Group.

Kellner, C. 1999. Bridget Baker, in *Liberated Voices: Contemporary Art From South Africa*, edited by Herreman, F. New York: The Museum for African Art: 132-145.

Koloane, D. 1999. Post-apartheid expression and a new voice, in *Liberated Voices* edited by F, Herreman. New York: Museum for African Art: 19–31.

Lippard, L. 1995. *The Pink Glass Swan*. New York: The New Press.

Lissoos, S. 1986. *Johannesburg Art and Artists: Selections from a Century*. Johannesburg: Johannesburg Art Gallery. (Catalogue for exhibition held at The Johannesburg Art Gallery, 23 October 1986-4 January 1987.)

Littlefield-Kasfir, S. 1999. *Contemporary African Art*. London: Thames and Hudson.

Loedolff, C. 1998. ABSA Group Collection. (collections update). *De Arte* 58, September: 48-50.

Loukakis, R. 1998. The road ahead – a national heritage: an overview of the MTN collection and collecting policy (collections update). *De Arte* 58, September: 51-53.

Martin, M. 1997. Art in the now South Africa: facing truth and transformation, in *Contemporary South African Art: The Gencor Collection*, edited by K. Geers. Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball Publishers: 131-150.

Martorella, R. 1990. *Corporate Art*. New York: Rutgers State University.

Matthews, R. A. (ed.). 1954. *Manual of First Aid*. Cape Town: The South African Red Cross Society.

Merrett, C. 1994. *A Culture of Censorship: Secrecy and Intellectual Repression in South Africa*. Cape Town: David Phillips Publishers.

Meintjies, J. 1991. *Decade of Young Artists: 10 Years of Standard Bank Young Artist Awards*. (Catalogue for an exhibition held at the Standard Bank National Festival of the Arts, 1991.)

Miller, M.V. 1995. *Intimate Terrorism*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company.

Moore, T. 1994. *Soul Mates*. Dorset: Element Books.

Nettleton, A. & Hammond-Tooke, D. (eds.) 1989. *African Art in Southern Africa: From Tradition to Township*. Johannesburg: D. Donker.

Peplos, D. F. & Peplos, J. 1987. *Overcoming Depression*. New York: Harpur and Row Publishers.

Perlin, S. (ed.). 1975. *A Handbook for the Study of Suicide*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Preller, K. 1998. The 1995 and 1997 Johannesburg Biennales as a 'reflection' of contemporary South African art. *De Arte* 57, September: 28-47.

Rademeyer, A. 1998. Telkom Art Collection.(collections update). *De Arte* 58, September: 44-47.

Rankin, E. 1997. Public statements/private sensibilities: art commissions and the Gencor experience, in *Contemporary South African Art: The Gencor Collection*, edited by K. Geers. Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball Publishers: 53-64.

*Red data AND etc. Marion Arnold* 1998. (Catalogue for solo exhibition held at the Standard Bank Gallery, Johannesburg, 1998).

Ruddock, E. H. (ed.) 1927. *Vitalogy: An Encyclopaedia of Health and Home Adapted for the Home, the Layman, the Family*. Chicago: Vitalogy Association.



Sack, S. (guest curator). 1988. *The Neglected Tradition: Towards a New History of South African Art (1930-1988)*. Johannesburg: Johannesburg Art Gallery. (Catalogue for an exhibition held at The Johannesburg Art Gallery, 23 November 1988-8 January 1989.)

Sack, S. 1989. In the name of art: a reflection on fine art by Steven Sack, in *Culture in Another South Africa*, Campschreur, W. and Divendal, J. (eds.). London: Zed Books Ltd: 74-96.

Scott, G. 1998. *Ardmore: an African Discovery*. Vlaeberg: Fernwood Press.

Siopis, P. 1990. *Some Thoughts on Women Representing Women*. Proceedings of the First Conference of the SAAAH (Tvl).

Smart, K. *The Stepping Stone Press: Stepping Stones to Success*. Natal Mercury.

Spiro, L. 1997. From Karoo landscapes to human mutants: the story of the development of the Gencor Collection, in *Contemporary South African Art: The Gencor Collection*, edited by K. Geers. Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball Publishers: 23-43.

Tallman, S. 1996. *The Contemporary Print: from Pre-Pop to Postmodern*. New York: Thames and Hudson.

Taylor, J. 1998. *Ubu and the Truth Commission*. Cape Town: University of Cape Town Press.

The Caversham Press. 1985. *The Spirit of our Stories*. (Catalogue for an exhibition held at The Monument Gallery, Grahamstown, at the Standard Bank National Festival of the Arts, 1985.)

The Caversham Press. 1999. *The Hourglass Project: A Woman's Vision*. (Catalogue for the inaugural exhibition held at The Lowe Gallery, Atlanta.)

Thompson, S. & Meintjies, J. 1998. *Vita Art Now*. Johannesburg: Johannesburg Art Gallery. (Catalogue for exhibition, Johannesburg Art Gallery 11 May-12 June 1988.)

Thorburn, D. 1999. Sobriety and sunshine: South African printmaking post-apartheid. *Printmaking Today*, September: 8-9.

*UNISA Art Lecturers*. (Catalogue for exhibition held at Pretoria Art Museum, 1986).

Van Robbroeck, L. 1990. Review Article: A Question of Objectives. *De Arte* 41, April: 37-42.

Van Robbroeck, L. 1992. The Ideology of Community Arts. *De Arte* 46, September: 49-57.

Verstraete, F. 1989. Township art: Context, form and meaning, in *African Art in Southern Africa: From Tradition to Township*, edited by Nettleton, A. & Hammond-Tooke, D. Johannesburg: D. Donker.

Verster, A. 1990. *Feé Halsted-Berning and Bonnie Ntshalintshali*. (Catalogue for The Standard Bank Young Artist Award exhibition held at The Monument Gallery, Grahamstown, at the Standard Bank National Festival of the Arts, 1990.)

*Vita Art Now 1992*. Johannesburg: Johannesburg Art Gallery. (Catalogue for exhibition, Johannesburg Art Gallery, 25 May-18 July 1992).

Walters, J. D. 1993. *Secrets for Women*. Nevada City: Crystal Clarity Publishers.

Williamson, S. 1989. *Resistance Art in South Africa*. Cape Town: David Phillip Publishers.

Williamson, S. 1999. Looking back, looking forward: an overview of South African art, in *Liberated Voices* edited by F. Herreman, New York: Museum for African Art: 32-41.

Wolpert, L. 1999. *Malignant Sadness: The Anatomy of Depression*. London: Farber & Farber Ltd.

Wye, D. 1996. *Thinking Print: Books to Billboards, 1980 – 95*. New York: The Museum of Modern Art.

Younge, G. 1988. *Art of the South African Townships*. London: Thames and Hudson.